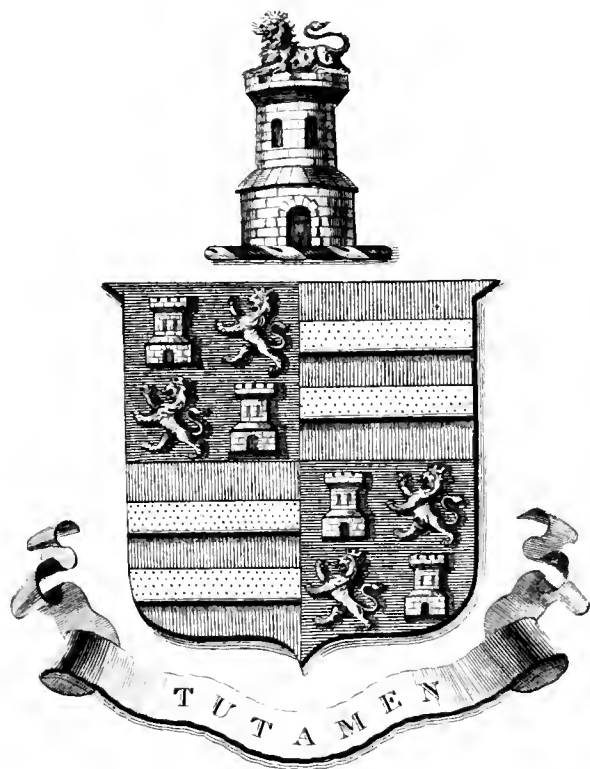


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KING CHARLES THE FIRST.

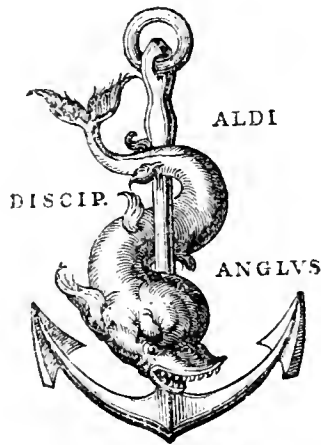
KING CHARLES

THE FIRST

A DRAMATIC POEM

IN FIVE ACTS

BY ARCHER GURNEY



LONDON

WILLIAM PICKERING

1846

LOAN STACK

CHISWICK :

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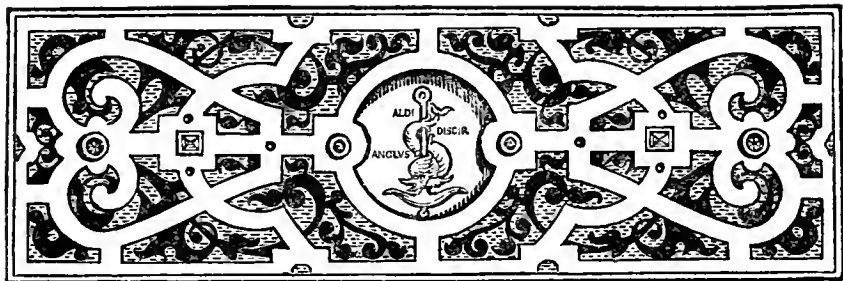
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DEDICATED

To the Memory of the

CHURCH'S ROYAL

MARTYR.



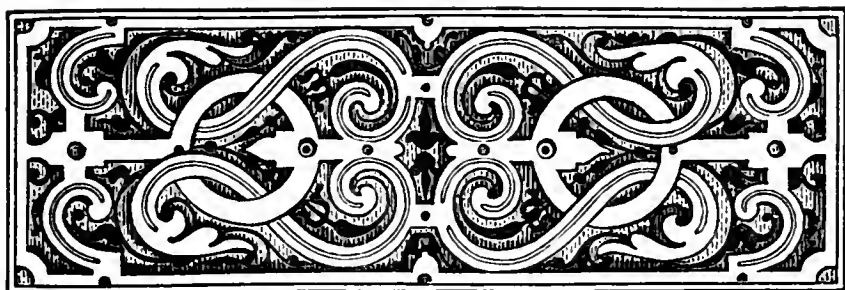
ADVERTISEMENT.

LET me preface the few remarks I have to make by the assertion, that this work is a poem, not a political manifesto, despite the theme of this "Advertisement." So much was absolutely necessary as a preparative for what must as necessarily follow. The preface and notes to this poem (as well as the poem itself), were written in the autumn of last year, and therefore some observations upon English Conservatives and Conservatism contained in them may seem unnecessarily severe. If, however, a Richmond, Bentinck, Stratford O'Brien, Disraeli, and many others, have redeemed the supporters of Church and State from the opprobrium of lethargy, and have evinced talents and courage worthy of their exalted cause, it must not be forgotten

that a large majority of the Peers of England have virtually sealed their own condemnation (as far as that condemnation lay within their power), by allowing themselves to be made the tools of a ministry, which they at once detested and despised, and by supporting measures with their votes and voices which their consciences enjoined them to reject. We do not say that some amongst them have not been influenced by nobler motives, but even these have been but too much swayed by the considerations of private friendship. Mutual reproaches however for the Past are useless. Let us look now for the dawn of a brighter day! The modern St. John has fallen with his party. It would be almost needless, however, to remind my readers, that those who have succeeded him in office are opposed to all the great institutions of the country, and that a violent assault upon the Church may be expected ere long, which will not be repelled without the display of unwonted courage and resolution.

October 26, 1846.

4, Maddox Street, Regent Street,
London.



PREFACE.

WHATEVER, regarded abstractedly, and in themselves, be the merits or demerits of this Work, the Author is anxious to place at once on record his conviction, that it by no means rises to the height of the great argument which it professes to illustrate and develop. It is difficult indeed to conceive a nobler subject, than the truly glorious life and death of our Holy Martyr-King. Since an objection may be raised to the Work, *ab initio*, on the score of a wild excess of admiration in its Author, I shall do well to state at once, that I firmly believe King Charles the First of England to have been one of the noblest of all mere human creatures that have breathed the air upon this earthly planet. In quoting Clarendon's praises, I may remind the reader that that worthy loyalist was an experienced statesman, not likely to be se-

duced by enthusiasm into any commendations surpassing the bounds of truth. Rather may it be said of him, that he often evinced a disposition to quarrel even with the King's actions, which can only be accounted for on the ground of a general love of censure, or at least a habit of very severe, if even accurate, investigation into the thoughts and actions of his fellow men. He then, the experienced, wary Clarendon—he, the aged, calculating, sometimes temporizing statesman says, summing up his eulogy of this blessed martyr, “To conclude, he was the worthiest gentleman, the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best Christian, that the age in which he lived produced.” And more than this, I boldly add, he was one of the very best of Kings!

This is no place for an extended essay on this widely branching theme. Suffice it to say, that King Charles evinced on the one hand a patience and gentleness which have rarely or never been equalled by man, and on the other, a degree of moral courage which necessarily exposes to some contempt the comparative pusillanimity of even a Clarendon, with all his (more or less) faithful contemporaries.

When Pym and Hampden with their abettors had talked and *forced* down all the loyal Peers and Commons; when those even who fled to the King

at York, (*Vide Clarendon and Whitlocke*,) refused to signify their own convictions to the world by means of a loyal declaration; when, in a word, a despicable fear of censure and ridicule, and a contemptible dread of being styled illiberal, suspended all the thoughts, words, and actions of those who should have supported the Crown and Church; then, then did King Charles step forth singly, and pen those memorable declarations of defiance to his rebellious and foul-mouthed "Parliament" which should be painted in letters of gold, as Palladia of our constitution, on the walls of our public edifices, and more especially on those of our new halls of legislature.

No man who has read these admirable compositions with an unbiassed mind, can have failed to recognize, that the landmarks of true liberty were then first clearly laid down within our British Island. No man, who has even once and carelessly perused them, can have failed to be struck by the majesty of their sentiments and the courage exemplified in their production. And when we further consider that at the time these edicts or addresses were penned, the King stood virtually alone, that those who should have been his best friends and supporters were then morally cowering in the dust, we shall feel, that our admiration of this true courage, this reliance on the hoped for mental nobi-

lity of his subjects, can scarcely possibly attain too high a pitch, or be expressed in worthy accents.

These observations lead me naturally to remark, that a strange resemblance will be found by the attentive observer betwixt the earlier days of Charles the First and our own immediate era. This resemblance I have endeavoured to bring artistically before the reader's mental view. Of course, no perfect historical parallel can ever be traced between any two periods. But one remarkable point of similitude we should not forget. Then, as now, a melancholy absence of true manly resolution, of noble self-conscious fortitude—in fine, of moral courage, characterized the so-called Conservative party, the supporters of Church and State. Then, as now, agitators were fierce and turbulent. A Cobden and a Bright have had their forerunners. If I name Hampden or Pym, I shall be held perhaps to pay too great a compliment to our existing "seditioners." But circumstances *made* those so-called "great men" of other days, and might make our own contemporaries. They, the Roundheads of the 17th century, had vast powers of popular oratory, an apparent political enthusiasm, and above all, extreme boldness or impudence. I do not think that their modern imitators can be considered very inferior to them in either of these respects. Nay more, if England then had its Cromwell, Ireland now has its O'Connell!

Then too we had a Young England, well-meaning, but semi-liberalizing, consorting with smooth Hampdens. We might easily point to living anti-types of a Falkland or a Sidney Godolphin.*

For a St. John—the Author does not assert that anything approaching to a parallel can be drawn betwixt that minister and the present† premier of the realm. St. John was indeed a double-dyed traitor, who, on the ground of expediency, perpetually betrayed the cause entrusted to his care : but then he never professed to be a cordial loyalist ; he never at any period of his life expressed an ardent affection for his country's institutions ! And thus we do not recognise that systematic series of “cozenings and equivocations” in his policy which seem to be the proudest boast of modern English ministerialism.—Above all, however, to complete this remarkable parallel betwixt two ages, we find in both periods an indolent cowardly inertness the main characteristic of all political adherents to THE CHURCH. The attacks upon it arose indeed then from widely differing sources ; *but their results in our own day may yet be found the same.*

It was not the Author's intention, in this Pre-

* See Note on the Character of Lord Falkland.—Page 259.

† This was written, it will be remembered, in November 1845.

face, to enter at any length into the mighty political questions involved in this subject—I have already said more indeed than I wished to do. For historical evidences, corroborative of the facts I have detailed, and justificatory of the characters I have drawn, I may refer the reader to the Notes appended to this work. This only would I yet say. The character of Hampden, so often highly extolled, has been painted by me with the darkest colours. I fully believe that remarkable man to have been more supreme for vile and infamous cunning, veiled beneath the mask of excessive honesty and single-mindedness, than any one of his factious contemporaries. I may also observe that the facts which I have introduced are for the more part corroborated by historians widely differing in their opinions, and that none of these facts are *adverse*, though some may indeed be considered *supplementary*, to the truth. For the latter, (I allude to the interviews betwixt the King, Pym, and Strafford, in the first, and the King and Cromwell, in the fifth act,) they are at least very consistent with probability, and borne out, in my opinion, more especially in the first of these two instances, by various subsequent circumstances and results. With these exceptions, I have introduced no important historical fact which is not well authenticated. Of one liberty, which all dramatic writers on historical subjects make free

with, I have indeed availed myself: I mean the right to bring the more remarkable circumstances of days or hours into such a space as may place them within the boundaries of dramatic reproduction. To conclude, this Poem claims to be something more than a political manifesto, however bold and independent. It would be treated as a poem also, apart from all political or religious considerations.

Still the Author must once more express his ardent desire, on the one hand, to awaken the friends of the Church and State, and the protectors of the Rights of Labour, from their melancholy and long-continued lethargy, and on the other, to yield some aid (however slight) to the enthronement in the hearts and souls of Englishmen of their murdered Patriot-King.

ARCHER GURNEY.

Rock Vale, Devonshire,
Nov. 5, 1845.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING CHARLES THE FIRST OF ENGLAND.

THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, *his child, seven years of age.*

Royalists and Cavaliers.

EARL OF STRAFFORD	PRINCE RUPERT
DUKE OF RICHMOND	LORD ASTLEY
MARQUIS OF HERTFORD	EARL OF LICHFIELD
EARL OF BRISTOL	LORD FALKLAND
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON	MR. HYDE
EARL OF LINDESEY	LORD CAPELL
LORD DIGBY	SIDNEY GODOLPHIN
MR. SERJEANT HERBERT	SIR MARMADUKE LANGDALE
LORD KEEPER LITTLETON	SIR JOHN CANSFIELD
ARCHBISHOP OF YORK	WALTER CANSFIELD
SIR DUDLEY CARLETON	SIR RICHARD GOURNEY
BISHOP JUXON	COLONEL PAGE.

Doubtfuls and Traitors.

ST. JOHN	LORD SAVIL
VANE THE ELDER	WILLIAM MURRAY.

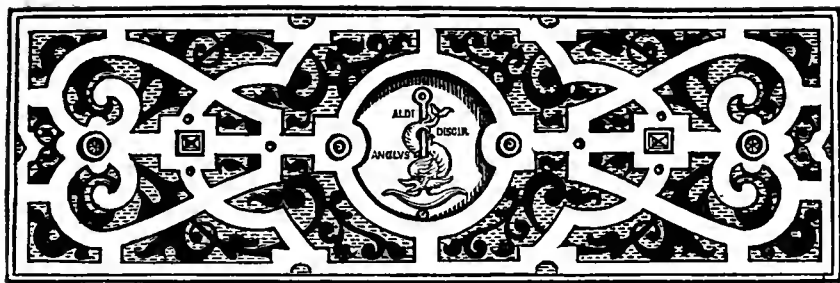
Puritans, Roundheads, and Rebels.

PYM	EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND
HAMPDEN	EARL OF HOLLAND
YOUNG VANE	EARL OF ESSEX
FIENNES	HOLLIS
CROMWELL	STRODE
HAZLERIG	RICHARD CROMWELL
FAIRFAX	SIMON JEPHSON
IRETON	LIVESAY.

QUEEN HENRIETTA. THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

WIFE AND DAUGHTERS OF CROMWELL.

*Citizens, Soldiers, Puritans, Cavaliers, Horsemen, Pages,
Ladies, &c.*



KING CHARLES THE FIRST.

ACT I.

1641.

SCENE I.

Westminster. Before the Entrance to the House of Commons.

In the foreground HYDE and HAMPDEN in converse.

A large body of PURITANS and CITIZENS of the Puritan party with mob, and a few CAVALIERS standing in small bodies to the right, occupy the background, on either side of the Grand Entrance.

As the curtain rises Confused Cries are heard from within the House.

PYM rises!—Peace!—Hail, hope of Israel!

PEOPLE [*without*].

Hail,

Great Pym!—The people's champion!

PURITANS.

And the Lord's
Appointed staff!

OTHERS.

A fountain in the waste!
Let the Philistines tremble!

PEOPLE.

Death to Strafford!

HAMPDEN [*after a pause*].

You hear those cries, good Master Hyde? You hear?
What boots it then that you and I waste time—
(Time ever precious, for the which we both
Must render up account to God: misuse,
Be sure, condemns us—) as I said, why waste
The precious moments in such vain dispute?
The King must yield! Here is no cause for hope
Or fear. You see how all are ranged against him
In steadfast resolution? Shall one man
Oppose a mountain toppling down?

HYDE.

Oh Sir,

Oh Hampden,—pardon lack of ceremony!

The great occasion of the hour doth waive
All minor shows of custom : let me speak
As man to man ; in some sort openly,
With confidence ! You have a heart to feel,
A brain to think : not senseless is your ardour,
Heedless of right or wrong, like many there
Within. 'Tis true, you are not the King's lover,
You think he did you wrong—

HAMPDEN.

Did England wrong !
Revenge, I thank the Lord, I know not.

HYDE.

Well,
So be it : England wronged he. He is man,
And man is apt to err. You, in his place,
Had erred perchance as he. Yet howsoe'er
This be, from you I ask for pity.

HAMPDEN.

Pity, Sir ?

When justice speaks—

HYDE.

I do degrade my King !

Yet you have power, vast power : though Pym may
rule

The popular voice in eloquent debate,
Methinks, you o'ersway Pym.

HAMPDEN.

You do mistake.

I am the humblest of the humble, I :
Nor aye aspired—

HYDE.

Be this too as you say !

I meant not to accuse you of ambition,
Save for what you deem England's weal. But surely
To use that power, Heaven may have deigned to
grant,
For righteous ends, can never misbecome you ;
Nor may I Hampden deem supine.

HAMPDEN.

I said not

I was supine.

HYDE.

Thence would I urge upon you
This course of action. You have power o'er Pym,

To move, if not command. Employ it then
For Strafford and for Truth ! Employ it, Hampden,
To save your King from perjury : for oh !
He is your King still ; and a noble King,
As your own heart may teach you. Whither stray I ?
Back to the point ! You have condemned Earl
Strafford :

On what just seeming, with what inward surety
Of lawful right, I will not stay to question.
Enough : you have condemned him ; rather say,
If it so please you, that the peers condemned him ;
And yet you scarce will question—we two standing
Alone as now—they were your mouthpiece, nought
Or more or less. Well then : before high Heaven
I speak and call on you to hear. You think
In your most inmost heart Earl Strafford traitor.
So be it : therefore have you sealed your oath
To his sure guilt. The King, your and my master—
Now listen, Hampden—he in his most secret,
Most inmost heart of hearts, deems Strafford guilt-
less !

Shall he then set his hand unto his guilt ?
Condemn whom he thinks innocent ? Would you

Forswear yourself, were you as he? O, pause
Before you answer! Seek not from your King
What would disgrace his meanest lowest subject.
Let Strafford live! In banishment—As captive—
Captive for life!—E'en as you will. But oh!
Ask not what may not be without your Lord's
Dishonour!

HAMPDEN [*after a pause*].

Hyde—

CRIES *from within the House*.

The King must yield! Live Pym,
Honour to Pym! Strafford shall die!

PEOPLE [*without*].

Shall die!

We'll storm Whitehall! The people's foes shall
perish:

Together, all together!

HAMPDEN.

Mark yon cries!

Be they mine answer! If you seek to save
The crown of England, strive to bend your master
To just compliance with our England's weal.

Deem me not stern ! I judge the King well-meaning,
Kindly in spirit, ill advised. For me,
I had as lief control the waves of ocean
And calm them at my will, as rule these billows
Of popular emotion. It is said,
And must be done ! Earl Strafford dies. I prythee
Think me not deaf to thy keen arguments :
Had I free choice, perchance, the loyal zeal
Which yet is mine might tempt me—to injustice ?
No, scarcely that ! And Strafford I believe
Most guilty. Howsoe'er this be, I hold
The King is not as any private man.
He represents the vast executive :
He moves while we do counsel. Thus the act
Of Strafford's death will not be his, though his :
He signs as King, not man. He hath no choice,
Since parliament with voice unanimous
Now urges—See, some friends of yours approach !
Pardon me ! I will leave you to their greetings,
And enter now the House.

*[Lord Falkland and Sidney Godolphin have
issued from the House, Hampden exchanges
bows with them as he passes and enters.]*

PEOPLE [*who recognise Hampden entering*].

Hail, worthy Hampden !
Bulwark of Judah's strength ! A tower of refuge !
The voice of holy Truth ! Hail, Hampden, hail !

HYDE [*to Falkland and Godolphin*].

There passes of all honest hypocrites,
All plain, straight, truthful, most unguileful liars,
The very worst and first !

GODOLPHIN.

How say you, Hyde ?
Hampden ? the English Hampden ? Oh you err !
Why, liberality may sure command—

HYDE.

Name not the word, Godolphin, in mine ears !
Its hollow echo maddens me !

FALKLAND.

What, Hyde !

The gentle, courteous Hyde, thus ire-bestraught ?
Ah, you are angered by poor Hampden's firmness :
Be *that* his vice then, if you will ! But now
To other matter. Pym hath spoken erst,
Is speaking still. We seek you.

HYDE.

And for what ?

FALKLAND.

To hear him.

GODOLPHIN.

Oh, his eloquence to-day

Seems more than human. To our ranks he turned

To where we sat, we clingers to the King :

Gentlemen, spoke he, would you save your Monarch

Awake you now to all the hour's demands.

The people are in arms. Both Peers and Commons

Backed with all England's voice, speak Strafford

guilty :

The King stands in the gap. For God's sake then,

Avert the coming danger. Trust us, gentlemen :

We know that you, as we, desire true freedom,

Abhor vile tyranny : we nothing doubt,

You are prepared (whate'er your former course,

While doubt still rested, *might* be), now that Strafford

Is thus deemed guilty, you are all prepared,

I say, to swell our cries for justice. England

Speaks now through me : in Freedom's name she

calls ye

To act as her true sons : persuade the King,
That this must be ! Good friends—

HYDE.

Enough ! enough !

Prate not the rebel cant !

FALKLAND.

Oh, this is prejudice
Indeed : not reason, Hyde. Godolphin speaks
The truth. And St. John too—

HYDE.

Ay, he ?

FALKLAND.

He owns
The King must be persuaded ; morally
Constrained.

HYDE.

The traitor ? owns ?

GODOLPHIN.

Come, Hyde, go back
With us. Hear Pym !

HYDE.

For what ? To prove a traitor too ?

Do you then think some sounding words of his—
Oh Falkland, oh Godolphin, that my faith
Should prove reproach to you, that I should now
Be powerless to maintain the cause of right,
Without condemning your desertion !

FALKLAND.

Hyde,

Desertion ?

HYDE.

And *what* then, can be such deeds ?
Such thoughts ? You know Earl Strafford guiltless,
know—

GODOLPHIN.

We thought so. But who is not fallible ?
Since England speaks, and Freedom—

HYDE.

Come despair !

All's lost. The very best and noblest, those
Who longest stemmed the tide, now borne away
Sink down the deep abyss, still down—still down—
And ne'er perchance shall rise again. Godolphin,
My heart is all too full for words : that thou,
That Falkland here, whom I believed my friend,

His King's true friend—that he should fall thus
blindly !

Oh Friends ! can I not give ye back yourselves ?
You knew, you still must know, however Strafford
May in light things have erred, that he is guiltless,
As you or I, or any other man,
Of treason. Can a thousand voices change
What is not to what is ? A million ? myriad ?
Let England speak, let all the world decree !
Shall you and I for this belie our souls,
And say, “ This Strafford whom we loved must
perish ” ?

Shall we desert our King ? We now alone
Are his, or were till now : he knows, as we,
That Strafford was to England loyal ever,
Loved England as ourselves, or more ; Shall we
then

Turn on him with his foes, and bid him slay,
Against his conscience, his most faithful subject,
Who ever loved him, ever—

FALKLAND.

For *his* sake,
Our Monarch's, do we act and speak, dear Hyde.

What would you have? You see the world's in arms
Against us: rebel crowds will soon besiege
Whitehall. No troops are nigh. There rests not
choice.

The King must yield, or (fearful thought, I own,
Yet soon perchance dread deed!) his sacred life,
Her life, the Queen's, dearer to him than all,
The Prince's, England's weal—in fine, I find
No words to paint those horrors, which, you feel
As I, may burst upon us!

HYDE.

No!

Our slavish fears create the dangers, Falkland,
From which those fears would fly. Could we act
boldly!

Could we meet Pym, o'erthrow him—

FALKLAND.

Idle dream!

GODOLPHIN.

He rests within the people's hearts, good Hyde!
They are his bulwark.

HYDE.

Falkland?

FALKLAND.

I can aid not.

Heaven be my witness, I would save my King:
And to that end concession now alone
Can aught avail.

GODOLPHIN.

Yes, Hyde, concession ; trust us !

HYDE.

Ay, when the sole defences of the state
Crumble away as ye do, then concession—
Concession ? True : the plea of honest fraud,
Of most infantine truthful guile, is this :
Of Hampden, and of St. John. “ *But concede :*”
All will be well ! You would secure the mansion :
Hurl then aside some few foundation-stones
To steady all the rest ! ’Tis like that they
Who ask such samples of your olden bulwarks
Will rest content with these ; ay, very like !
Concession to a wrong against man’s conscience
Is tantamount to fall ! Here lies the right
And there the wrong : take once the downward path,
Abandon once the vantage ground of justice,

On grounds of what men call *expedient*; then
Is no return: all's lost.—I do perceive
I speak in vain. The poison of this age,
The spurious vain delusive liberality
Which tramples upon right, and in the name
Of Freedom, doth usurp tyrannic sway,
This hath infected you. I scarce can hold ye
My heart's true friends henceforth!

GODOLPHIN.

Nay, Hyde!

FALKLAND.

Dear Hyde!

GODOLPHIN.

We are not so *resolved*—

FALKLAND.

We are most willing

To hear thy counsel.

HYDE.

Mark yon Puritan,

Who issues from the door, the Brewer's son;
That most malignant Cromwell. He comes charged
With tidings of Pym's sovereign eloquence,

Which prove vile treason loyalty. Attend him !
He seeks his Puritanic friends, to spread
The rumour of this triumph ! Rebel cur !

FALKLAND.

Here then at least our voices jump together.
I hold the man most dangerous.

GODOLPHIN.

I abhor him
As poisonous toad or viper. 'There's a craft,
A guile, which hath no fellow, smoothes his brow,
While his stern dogged eyes—

HYDE.

Hist, mark him only !

CROMWELL [*who has issued from the House, coming forward, Puritans gathering round him*].

Yes, chosen of the Lord, I the most lowly
Of all the sons of Israel, I beheld,
I heard, and I will speak !

PEOPLE *and* PURITANS.

The godly Cromwell !

Hear him, ay, hear him !

CROMWELL.

Heaven and earth bear witness
To the oppressor's fall ! to Israel's triumph !
The Lord hath spoken. Ay, his mighty voice
Our ears hath smote. The Spirit moved his servant
And he hath prophecied in trouble's hour.

PEOPLE.

Whom means he ?

CROMWELL.

Pym, the vessel of God's justice,
The sword of the Most High ! and England's
champion.

Oh, mighty was the Spirit's power within him,
And he did speak ; we heard. Woe ! woe ! he cried
To Babylon, to empires built on fraud,
And sway tyrannic : to their rulers woe,
Their counsellors. The avenging sword of justice
Shall overtake their flight : and *him*—(he spoke,
And godly fire shone in his eyes) ; him, Strafford,
The worst of the oppressors, vengeance' sword
Shall now lay low. But madness can impel
Aught Englishman to urge his King to ruin :

But hatred of the Lord, but lust satanic
Can urge aught seeming Christian to defence
Of one so stained with hell-born crime as Strafford.
Hear, oh ye senators : above is throned
A Power that will condemn ye if ye falter.
Without stands ranged the People : ay the People !
Proves not this day that ancient proverb true ?
The People's voice and God's own voice are One.
He is a rebel to the state, a wretch
Who dares defy his God, the People's hater,
Who now breathes word for Strafford !

PEOPLE.

Righteous Pym !
Wise Pym ! the Champion of the Right !

CROMWELL.

And then,
Pym ended thus : or to this purport—I
May never speak his words or breathe his fire :
“ Heaven then demands the fall of this proud man,
Earth ratifies the sentence. One alone
In heaven or earth, the King, bids all defiance ;
And seeks to shelter Strafford. Last were I

Of all to whisper aught of evil import
Against the anointed head: yet let us think,
The people's wrath is deadly. If they throng
Around the palace now, demanding Strafford
Their rightful prey, and if the King refuse
To hear them; if, when all his counsellors
This act of legal justice urge on him,
When Heaven commands, when earth demands, he
still

In obstinate perversion 'gainst his nature
Refuse to bend; what judgment thence may flow
On us, on him, I fear to think. Alas!
I cannot but remember Israel
Had power of old to crush tyrannic Kings.
Lived there not Jehu? Was not God with him?
Our King is just, is good: as such I love him;
But as he is misguided to his ruin,
Our England may revenge. Think friends, of this!
We cannot blind the people; they have eyes,
Have arms. May Heaven maintain its cause!" He
spoke.

At first an awful silence followed; then,
The loud acclaim of shouts approving burst

As it would reach high heaven. And St. John rose.
I pass'd from forth the hall to speak with ye,
And for the future arm ye.

PEOPLE.

Thanks, brave Cromwell !
He fears no tyranny.

PURITAN.

He yet shall prove
A strong avenger of the Lord !

CRIES.

Live Cromwell !

FALKLAND.

See, see, the doors are cast aside. The sitting
Is ended.

PEOPLE.

Hail, ye Champions of the Right !
Hail Chiefs of Israel !

[*The members issue from the House. Amongst them are Pym, Hollis, Hampden, Young Vane, Fiennes, Hazlerig, Strode, many other Puritans, and Cavaliers ; amongst the latter, Sir George Lisle, the elder Vane, St. John, &c.*]

PEOPLE [*confusedly*].

Hampden, honest Hampden !
True Hollis, too !—No Hollis ! Strafford's friend
Is he. Young Vane, the noble Vane !
Ha, Pym ! hail Pym ! the Champion of God's cause !
Live Pym for ever !

PURITAN.

Samson, smite, destroy
The fell Philistines.

CRIES.

Death to Strafford ! Death
To all his friends ! Live Pym !

PYM [*when the tumult has subsided*].

Knows no man here,
Of tidings from Whitehall ?

SERGEANT HERBERT [*coming forward*].

Alas ! I know :
I spoke the King but erst.

PYM.

His answer, Herbert ?

HERBERT.

Was—was—alas ! refusal still. I pray you

Do not think *me* to blame. I have besought,
Entreated him upon my knees to yield :
In vain ! Not one of all his counsellors
But bids him cede to what must be. He still
Remains unmoved as rocks.

HAMPDEN.

And hope ye not
To change him ?

ST. JOHN.

As his Minister of State,
And yet the friend of England, I would answer,
“ Never : I have no hope ! ” I must avow
His obstinacy fatal ; but what is
'Twere vain to hide.

HYDE.

Most candid counsellor
Of Royalty ! for once perchance, unwittingly,
'Thou serv'st thy Master ! Ay, ye hear aright :
Ye will not change him : he abandons not
His servant. [*to Falkland and Godolphin*]. See
ye that the very tidings
Of his fixed will coves rebels into silence ?

Prove the King's friends but firm, all may be well.
Hampden is baffled : Pym too bites his lip :
They thought the tidings of Pym's triumph here
Would work strange miracles. Now undeceived
They gaping stand at fault.

HAMPDEN [*to Pym*].

Leave them to me !

The people will attend me. [*Advancing*]. Eng-
lishmen :

Ye have heard that nought can move your Mo-
narch's will ;

That he is firmly bent to shield a traitor
From your just wrath. If ye do think obedience
Is your best duty ; if ye rest content
To let this Strafford riot in your blood,—
As he will do, I doubt not ; then I counsel
Your swift dispersion to your several homes.—
My countrymen, our weakness is our ruin.

Perchance, some centuries hence, when England's
sons

Shall feel true love for freedom, shall have hearts
And souls to ward their dearest—then what now
Our weakness hinders, may be done. For us,

It boots us, if we would not hazard all,
To bow beneath the yoke, and feel our foes
Ride over us triumphant. Let these Bishops
To their Starchambers drag us : let the King
Abolish England's Parliament : and Power
Make every Englishman a Slave. So be it !
The thorns we sow, we reap.

PEOPLE.

It shall not be !

No, never ! We are free ! We will have Freedom !
Hence to the Palace—to Whitehall !

HAMPDEN.

Good friends,

I counsel not such acts : your own hearts only
Should teach ye what to do. For aught constrained
Is valueless.

PEOPLE.

Let us depart ! o' the instant !

Let the King know the People's power !

FIENNES.

Ay—ay—

He will yield then, believe me.

YOUNG VANE.

He must yield !

Compulsion knows not Ifs.

HYDE.

And think ye then

To awe King Charles to fear ? O bootless thought !

Has he ne'er proved his courage ? He, your King,

Supported by the inward trust of Heaven—

Should he—Enough ! when hath he trembled yet ?

When trembled for himself ? And should he yield

His friend, his subject ?—Ye may never hope it.

All will prove vain.

FIENNES.

He speaks the truth. It will

Prove vain. We know, the King will yield not.

HOLLIS.

Ay :

And he *is* King, remember !—After all,

Prayers would move more than threats. What say

you, Hampden ?

Is't you who counsel this—this seeming treason ?

HAMPDEN.

I, Hollis ?

HOLLIS.

Ay : you dream not of revolt ;
I will believe you : but to what may this,
Must all this lead ? “ Touch not the Lord’s
Anointed ! ”

So Heaven hath spoken.

YOUNG VANE [*to Pym who stands abstracted*].

All is lost, dear Pym.
The People halt irresolute. Our friends
Seem terror-struck.

HYDE.

Oh Englishmen, retire,
Each to his home ! What justice claims of him
Your King will sure perform. Heaven frowns upon
The semblance of Rebellion. Wait some days !
The King will render reasons for his acts,
And ye may gather here again, to claim
What ye then hold your dues.

MANY AMONGST THE PEOPLE.

He’s right. We know
Hyde loves the People too.

OTHERS.

Let us disperse !

PYM [*waking from his reverie*].

That, *that*, must gain the goal !

[*He advances towards the People.*

Friends, Englishmen,

I have sure means to work your King to justice

If ye support me : throng ye round the Palace,

I seek his Royal presence : and within

The hour is Strafford sentenced.

PEOPLE [*confusedly*].

Strafford perish !

Hear Pym !—We will obey thee.

FALKLAND.

With a word,

He sways them to his will.

PYM [*to the People*].

About your business !

I too must haste to mine. The end of justice,

Your vile oppressor's death, rests with yourselves.

Raise your free voices round Whitehall : their echoes

May find some entrance to the King : and so

Until we meet, our goal obtained, farewell !
This is the hour of England's fall for ever,
Or dawn of her great glory.—On to victory !

[Amidst loud and discordant cries of "Death to Strafford!" "To Whitehall!" the Crowd retires on every side, and the scene changes.]

SCENE II.

Chamber in the Royal Palace of Whitehall. Entrances right and left. The window in the background commands a view of the Thames. Time, towards evening.

KING CHARLES and QUEEN HENRIETTA enter in converse from the right.

QUEEN.

NAY, Charles, you'll grant me audience here at least !
You never yet refused to hear me speak—
And now—when all's at stake—

KING CHARLES.

The very reason
Why I would hear you not. Much is at stake—

I know it—much I now must venture. Must!
I have no choice. Why then renew a theme
So painful?

QUEEN.

Dearest Charles, this Strafford now—
You do not think me cruel: nay, you know
I would do much to save the weakest, poorest,—
And far more one, whom I believe your friend:—
Yet—after all—has he a gentle soul,
A kind soul, this proud Strafford? Me he loves not,
I let that pass. I do not think of that:
But had he not some bloody counsel ever
For war and carnage? If your heart says, “Yes,”
Your people are not so far wrong, and Strafford—

KING CHARLES.

Strafford hath ofttimes erred. I own him proud,
Perchance too proud—at times too absolute,
Too heedless of the means to gain his end.
I think all this; nor would I answer only,
“He sinned, if he so sinned, for *me*!” For evil
I never may, nor will, abet; least, surely,
When practised in my name. But Strafford, love,

Hath never deeply erred, nor needs excuses.
He has a noble spirit, oh most noble !
His very vices from his powers proceed :
His firmness may be warped to sternness, and
His hasty zeal to sanguine execution ;
Yet with all this, we know, we both well know,
He hath most loyally acquitted him,
Hath proved him my true servant : more than this,
Hath shown him England's friend at soul. I love
 him ;
And all who throughly know must love : thou too !
Thou can'st not truly wish me to dishonour,
Unjustly to dishonour such a man ?
Speak : let me know my own true Henrietta,
For in these prayers I lose thee.

QUEEN [*after a pause*].

It is so ;

Yes, Charles, I must in sooth obtain thy pardon,
For hinting thoughts like these. Misjudge me not !
I do believe this sentence necessary,
And strove to veil the horror of the deed
From thy dear eyes : to lead thee if I could
Truly to slight this Strafford : thence with pangs

Less dread to immolate him. Thus I chose
To risk the seeming hateful in thine eyes,
By such suggestions, for thy sake.

KING CHARLES.

Dear wife :

I know thee now once more ; for never yet
I thought thee base in soul.

QUEEN.

Yet, Charles, I pray thee,—
Complete this sacrifice !—I scruple not
To own to thee, I do believe Earl Strafford
Guiltless of treason, nay, a noble pillar
On which to stay thy throne. I weep his death.
I have already wept in floods of tears,
The need for this most dreadful prayer of mine,
“ Slay thy true servant !” Oh, I feel that he
Would be the first to yield his life for thine,
Would press this course upon thee. All demand
His fall. Thy very Privy Council, all
Exhort thee to subscribe this deathly sentence.
Thy people raging howl for thy assent :
And threat thy death, our death, thy children’s death,

If thou resist them. Ay : I fable not.
I have too certain tidings of their daring.
What then remains—

CHARLES.

But death, if death be needful !
Dear child, thou know'st I have no skill in words :
I cannot frame and mouth my purpose grandly,
But simply act the right. I will not yield :—
Nor think so dread the danger !

QUEEN.

Dearest Charles,
Let me entreat thee, not for *thy* life's sake,
Though that be *much* to me—be *All*, my Charles ;—
But for my own poor life do I conjure thee—
O Charles, I shall seem base ; yet think me so !
I will bear all to save thee from thyself :—
Then oh ! remember, (for myself I speak,
Since I through *me* alone reach *thee*,) in France,
Where pass'd my happy childhood, free was I,
And safe, and blest ; here now for years have dwelt,
A prey to ceaseless fears ! and now my life—
I cannot act this part ! No, Charles, dear Charles ;

Thou know'st that I would die for thee : thy throne,
Thy children—these demand some thoughts from
thee :

Thou stoop'st, to save them.

KING CHARLES.

For my sway, dear wife,

With honour only would I live to hold it.

And for our children—dear, dear pledges ! Ah,

Thou dost but wound my heart with these vain
terrors :

Nor they nor I have aught to fear !

CRIES [*from without heard gathering in the
distance*].

King Charles !

Strafford—yield Strafford's head ! Awake, King
Charles !

QUEEN [*trembling*].

Hear'st thou ?

KING CHARLES.

I hear.

PAGE [*entering from the left*].

Sire, crowds beset the palace,

And urge—

KING CHARLES.

Go, friend ! We heard their cries. See only
That none molest or mock these crowds ! Retire !

[*Exit Page (L).*]

Dear Henrietta, tremble not !—This is
Indeed an hour of trial :—scarce for me ;
For duty far too loudly cries within me,
To leave aught power of choice. But thou, a woman,
Not bound as I to Strafford,—knowing little
Of his surpassing merit ; *feeling* too
More deeply than thou *thinkest* : (thought preemi-
nent

In woman, I, for one, could ever love not :)
Thou hast a fearful contest to encounter
With thy love's fears. Sweet, think not of these
broils !

All will be well. The people's rage moved lightly
Will even as lightly melt to love again.

List not those cries ! How strangely do they blend
With the sweet bells from yonder gothic tower,
Pealing athwart the waters. Such the contrast
Of mild religious awe to earthly clamour !

For on the morrow, and the morrow's morrow,

At this still hour those bells will still peal on,
But these harsh sinful cries, the moment's offspring,
Will with the moment pass to nought away :
They, and the passions, even as briefly raging ;
And, as the echo of those cries, borne far
Up the deep silvery Thames, there dies in air
In the dim distance, seeming well to blend
With the calm beauty of the hour, and heighten
The melody of silence ; so, the thought
On this vain uproar shall in future years
Prove but a gentle memory ! since *we* shared
The cares, it wooed to life, together.

QUEEN.

Charles !

KING CHARLES.

Dear Henrietta—see our mother, Nature,
How peacefully she smiles : as if to tell us
Such fears and cares as these need scarce amaze,
Scarce fright us from ourselves. I never saw,
Methinks, the waters smile so lovingly,
Beneath the golden kisses of yon sun
Who sinks so grandly down. Yon dark clouds
gather,

In the far east: they seem, as threatened they,
“ Soon ’neath night’s sway shall we invade the
 realm

Thou holdest still, proud sun—yon western verge
Of heaven: the lightnings then may leap from us
And laugh thine orb to scorn!” What smiles the
 sun?—

“ Poor fools, I shall arise, when dawns the morrow,
And scatter ye afar: meantime, rejoice!
Live out your little hour—I would not scorn ye;
Ye too may serve your end!”—Can you not point
The moral to these fancies?

QUEEN.

Dearest Charles,
I fear you will despise me.

KING CHARLES.

My sweet wife!
Despise thee? I? Go to our children, dearest!
Bear them this kiss from me. I will not wish
Their sire were thoughtless once again as they:
No, let us make *them* envy *us*! The *task*,
The painful *task* is ours. If we can conquer,

Shall they enjoy in purer halcyon hours :
So hope, so trust, dear wife ! and now, now leave me !
I have yet much to think on. In an hour
I may be at thy side. [Exit the Queen (R.)

[The cries without increase in loudness and frequency. The King stands awhile listening : then speaks.

My people ! Ye

Whom I have ever loved thus wound me. Oh !
This is most hard to bear ! Poor Henrietta !
I could not own mine urgent fears to thee—
But I do think thy terrors may not lead thee
So far astray, as I would fain persuade.
I am alone. Those who should serve my cause,
Should fight my battles, join in arms against me,
Or craven fly the contest. Hyde alone
With Falkland steadfast proved : and even of these
What hour assures me ? And Capell ?—O Strafford !
Thou art more faithful than they all : 'tis true
Thy nature hath perchance a sterner bent ;
But at such hour, to stem such tide, avails
No well-intentioned weakness. All my friends
Or would-be friends yield to the moment's clamour.

My council all, without one doubtful voice,
Demand my Strafford's death : the bishops too,
The holy pillars of the church—alas !
That I should say it—they are silent, or
Adjure me to my shame : save one, poor Juxon ;
And even he hath left my side : hath yielded
His office in dark danger's hour !—This Pym,
This Hampden ! Oh, these men have mighty sway !
They reign despotic o'er the Commons, and
They thirst for Strafford's blood—and my poor
people
Mimic the cries which traitors—Ha ! who comes ?

PAGE [*on the left*].

Sire, all the members of your secret council
Crave audience.

KING CHARLES.

Bid them enter straight. [*Page retires.*

Poor Strafford,
Thou little thought'st when thou did'st yield my
service

Thy every thought and deed, thy life could aye
Prove dangerous to thy Master. Oh whate'er

These traitors deem—though I may banish thee—
Thou shalt have such sure earnest of my love
As shall secure thee purer joy in exile
Than thou e'er knew'st in height of sway. They
enter,
To take my latest answer.

Enter LORD KEEPER LITTLETON, ST. JOHN, *the*
elder VANE, EARL OF HOLLAND, *the* ARCH-
BISHOP OF YORK, SIR DUDLEY CARLETON,
SERGEANT HERBERT, *Lords, Bishops, &c.*

KING [*after a pause*].

Why, my Lords,
Doth now your presence honour me ?

LORD KEEPER LITTLETON.

O Sire !

Yon crowds without may prove our simplest answer.
We come to urge you yet again to grant
The loud demand of England. Blame us not :
Our love and duty lead us hither now,
Even at the peril of our lives ! We pray you
Relax the royal rigour of your will !
Bend to your subjects' prayers !

KING CHARLES [*after a pause*].

Do all your voices
Concur in this request?

SIR DUDLEY CARLETON.

They do indeed,
Your Majesty.

EARL OF HOLLAND.

Without one sole dissentient!

ST JOHN.

And we would pray your Majesty to mark
The all but certain issue of refusal,—
It is rebellion on your subjects' part,
And, as we fear, at least a social chaos.
Here is no room for doubt or choice. The people
Speak all as one. Your royal life's in danger;
So is the Queen's, your consort, if you yield not
To justice' loud demands.

KING CHARLES.

You, reverent Bishops,
Concur you in this counsel?

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

More than this!

We deem such course not only most expedient,
But surely right and just.

KING CHARLES.

Your reasons, Sir ?

Think you my conscience nought ?

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

Your public conscience

As monarch, Sire, constrains the very actions
Your private will might shrink from. For alas !
There is no question, whether you should save
Or should not save Earl Strafford : only this
Remains to learn ; if you would perish with him !
The conscience of a king to save his kingdom,
The conscience of a husband for his consort,
The conscience of a father for his children,
Will all o'erweigh the conscience of a friend.

ST. JOHN.

And, to be brief, the people thunder, Sire,
Even at your palace-gates. No time for doubts
Is this. Or yield, or—

KING CHARLES.

Silence, Sir ! My Lords

And Gentlemen, 'tis fit you hear once more
My royal resolution—which no voice
From earth or hell shall change. I speak too warmly,
And do demean myself by this sharp zeal.
Enough. Full calmly then ; my choice is ta'en.
I will abide the brunt of crowds or Commons :
I will not yield the life of him, I hold
More true, more loyal to his King and England,
Than now the best of all my subjects. Go,
And bear this answer to my people ! Charles,
If that suffice not, will himself confront them,
And calm their ardours down.

ST. JOHN.

What desperate madness—

KING.

You have your answer, Sir. Retire !

SERGEANT HERBERT [*stepping forward*].

A page

Craves entrance, Sire. He has some weighty mis-
sive.

KING CHARLES.

Bid him approach !

PAGE [*bearing a letter on a salver*].

A letter, from the Earl
Of Strafford, in the Tower !

COUNSELLORS.

Ha ! Strafford writes !

KING CHARLES [*taking it*].

'Tis well. Withdraw, my Lords. With this true
subject

Who now would woo our hearing through this mis-
sive,

I commune but alone. Once more I give
My oft-urged answer. Banishment perchance
For some few years I may be urged to yield to !
Nought further. Fare ye well !

[*The Lords of the Council, &c. retire. Charles
remains alone.*]

And now,

Let me give audience to my loving Strafford !
What writes he ? “ Sovereign Liege and most dear
Master !”

Pause, O my tears ! I would not let ye flow
For many griefs : let not my pride in this

True servant's faith unman me ! Noble Strafford !
What askest thou ? Ha ! As I half suspected :
He calls on me to slay him ! Princely soul !
Whom thy King envies in thy Tower.—He bids me
Think on the dangers my posterity
Must run through him ; assures me that the thought
Of their or my great loss through him, would work
His soul to frenzy. “ For my sake,” he says,
“ Dear Sire ! work thou the will of these stern men,
And let my death thy royal kingdom free
From all these troubles.” Noblest, truest subject !
I do believe my steadfastness to serve him
Hath wrought him bliss indeed, but woe as well,
Through fears for me and mine. For, know I not,
Held I his place, the fears of what might chance
Through my protection to my king, would work me
Much sorrow, nay, much torture ! I should wish too
That my poor single life should not be balanced
One moment 'gainst the welfare of my country,
The safety of my King. It well befits thee,
Dear Strafford, thus to act : but me behoves
As King to shield my servant : as I will do.
They reach thee but through me and mine. And
Oh !

I do not yield my duty to my love
In this : for England's peace and England's being
Are not at stake. Even *were* they—But I feel
These terrors need not fright me. This commotion,
When they who work it find it yields no harvest,
Will quickly die away. Again !

PAGE [*once more appearing (R.)*].

Your Majesty,
 One of your trusty Commons, as he words it,
 A loyal burgess, craves your audience.

KING CHARLES.

Ha!

His name?

PAGE.

Sire,—Pym !

KING CHARLES.

Bid him forthwith draw nigh ! [*Exit Page.*
He comes in happy hour. I do believe him,
Despite his treasonous essays, of all
Our factious foes the worthiest. I will speak him,
And end his hopes to change our will. Henceforth
He shall not doubt his monarch.

PYM *is ushered in by Page, who immediately
again retires.*

PYM [*who bows lowly*].

May I then

Approach, Sire !

KING CHARLES.

I have wished to see you here.
'Tis well we meet at last, you, Sir, and I :
And learn from closer ken to know each other.
What seek you of me ?

PYM.

For the suit of England
Against Earl Strafford I would pray your hearing.

KING CHARLES.

Speak, Sir.

PYM.

I need not now renew discourse
Upon that noble's guilt. Whate'er his merits
Your courts of Parliament have judged him worthy
Of ignominious death. Your nation, Sire,
As with one voice requires this sacrifice.
Why do you idly strive then—(pardon me

If I should seem disloyal : 'tis in words
Not thoughts)—why seek you still to save one
doomed,
And justly doomed, by Earth and Heaven ?

KING CHARLES.

Pym,
We speak as man to man : and to your question
I give as plain an answer. I do shield
My servant, though the world proclaims him guilty,
Because I know him innocent. You know too
That menaces and clamour only, gained
The sentence of his death ! And therefore—

PYM.

Pause,
For the crown's sake ! for England's sake ! your
life's !
The lives of all you hold most dear ! The people
Are raging in their frenzy : none may check
Their ire—save you Sire only—

KING CHARLES.

By submission :—
By basest cowardice ! You know me not.

PYM.

The Queen, your consort—

KING CHARLES.

Ha ! One more such word,
I drive you from my presence ! Dare not, Sir,
To menace her !

PYM.

I menace not. So be it !
One other thought I still would urge.

KING CHARLES.

Speak briefly !

PYM.

Grant then your hopes be realized, these crowds
Reduced again to silence, and the crown
Awhile secured. Still one near danger threatens,
Which I esteem a good, and but resign
For Strafford's life.

KING CHARLES.

What mean you ?

PYM.

Sire—the Church !

KING CHARLES.

Ha ! What of that ?

PYM.

You know the Bill designed
To extirpate all Bishops from our soil !
By *me* supported, with my full approval,
That Bill must pass first Commons and then Lords.
You know, how powerless are your friends : how void
Of courage or of force. The people, Sire,
May, as you feel, be lightly moved, to raise
Far louder cries for this, than Strafford's death.
In brief, if Strafford dies not, speedily
The church you love shall pass away for ever !
I swear it !—If you yield to Strafford's death,
I will lend seeming aid to this great measure,
But will not let it pass the Commons' hands
Whilst you sway England's weal !—A compact,
Sire !

Pym never lied. It is not Hampden speaks,
Nor Vane ; but Pym.—The Church or Strafford !
Choose !

I will not pause to touch on Laud !

KING CHARLES [*after a pause*].

Without there !

[*To Page entering.*

Prepare—I had forgotten Pym still present.

Farewell, Sir ! [*aside*] Strafford only shall resolve
me. [To Pym.]

Within few hours you learn my sure decree ;

Never to be recalled.—The Church, or Strafford !

[*As the King and Pym go out on separate
sides the scene changes.*]

SCENE III.

Strafford's Cell within the Tower lit by moonlight.

STRAFFORD *alone.*

STRAFFORD.

A STILL calm night ! and through this darksome
grating

I mark the quiet moon, and stars of heaven,

All peaceful ! Would my heart were hushed as
they !

But how should *I* know calm, whilst I believe

The State, my very King, through me in danger ?

Were I but dead ! And so these knaves triumphant ?

These most accursed foes of right ? these brawlers ?
Pestilent—Shame thee, Strafford ! Still the old
Impatient passions ! Nothing stills thee then ?
Captivity nor care ! But it is hard,
It is much more than hard, that men like these,
These mouthers of lip-honour, crafty workers
Of all sedition, all accursed disorder,
These Pym and Hampden thus should master
Strafford,

And brand as rebel ! traitor ! one—No more.
I will not think on't. What must be, must be.
May my King yield !—Hark ! some one stirs with-
out.

The gaoler—and a voice ? It must be Hollis.
He only here may seek me.

[*After a short pause, enter Hollis.*]

Yes, 'tis thou !

Be greeted, friend !

HOLLIS.

Be greeted, Strafford !

STRAFFORD.

How

Fare my dear children ?

HOLLIS.

Well, poor friend.

STRAFFORD [*after a short pause*].

The King?

What does he? Know'st thou?

HOLLIS.

He refuses still—

The crowd beset the palace gates this eve,
Full many thousands strong; for her life's sake
The Queen implored him; and his counsellors
All, all, thy death demanded.—He was firm!

STRAFFORD [*with a burst of affection*].

My noble King! I thank thee, thank thee, Heaven,
That gave me such a monarch! Not that I
My life would shield: but that he thus should deign
To peril all for me. O Heaven, reward him!
Dear Master! Yet—this joy is not—not selfish:
For pride in such a King *may* kindle joy
Full loyal!—Still this must not be.—Oh, Hollis!
There's not a man in England save King Charles
Would act a part like this; and, from his mercy,
Fools dare esteem him weak! I know him, Hollis.

He is not weak, save in his modest kindness
Which aye believes his servants must be true,
And yields his better reason to their counsels
Too oft : too oft ! Enough of this. You see
How noble is my King—but I must save him !
He may not peril England for my weal—
Nor his own righteous head. Oh Hollis, Hollis !
What are these friends of yours ? Pym, Fiennes,
Hampden !

Or men or fiends ? And you can call them friends ?
I do believe, were you not bound to me
Through such familiar ties, you would be first
Amongst my life-seekers !

HOLLIS.

I know not, Strafford ;

Happy for me, I am not called to judge !
The ties you speak on, do absolve my soul
From such fell duty. But the men you blame
Have noble hearts and souls.

STRAFFORD.

Malignant traitors !

False to their King are they.

HOLLIS.

And true to England !

STRAFFORD.

You mouth their language. How can this be so ?
If England's King be noble as King Charles,
Be just, be pious, royal-hearted ; who
Shall dare to part the Twain ? O no more phrases !
You hear this cant within the House all day :
Retail it not to me ! I have to learn
And ever shall have, how pure loyalty
Is inconsistent with the love of England,
Because your King in all thinks not like you.
Are *you* infallible ? Must he be wrong,
You right, that you condemn him for not sharing
All *your* vain fancies ? He reveres the Church,
For instance—owns in that his Maker's image,
Would die for it at any hour—and you
Think it a soulless idol. Goes *right* with you,
When you pronounce your King must be distract
To dare contend with *you* ? Your *Sovereign Com-*
mons ?

Since when have they monopolized all right,
All sense, all justice ? But the King must needs

Appear a *Tyrant* if he dare to claim
A single thought his own? Out on *your* tyranny!
Which is the direst servitude of all!
When brawling knaves command and gaping fools,
Thinking them Gods—By Heaven, they shall not
conquer!

This Hampden and this Pym! I must not die
And leave my King all lonely. Hyde I know
Hath courage: but for all the lesser brood,
Essex or Holland, Falkland—ay, the best!
They are as light enclosures, bulrush reeds
Entwined to guard some lofty statue's form
From the encroaching seas.

HOLLIS.

Hark! some one comes!

STRAFFORD.

Strange visitants at such an hour!

*Enter the Gaoler, ushering in KING CHARLES, who
is enveloped in a long mantle, with his hat drawn
over his brows.*

GAOLER [*to the King*].

I go, Sir,—

Should not this gentleman withdraw ?

[*The King bows.*]

STRAFFORD.

Most strange !

[*Aside*] If it should be—if! *if!*—O God!—[*aloud*]

Dear Hollis,

I pray you leave me for this night. Farewell.

I need your prayers that God may send me light

How I should further act in this.

HOLLIS.

Farewell

Dear Strafford ! Arm you for the worst. Your
heart

Acquits you. So may Heaven !

[*He goes. The Gaoler also retires. A pause.*]

STRAFFORD [*hesitating*].

Should I think—

KING CHARLES [*throwing aside his mantle*].

My Strafford !

STRAFFORD.

Yes, my King ! 'Tis thou ! Oh, now

All is repaid !

[*He falls at his feet.*]

KING [*raising him*].

Come to my arms, true servant?

Thy deep adversity for my poor sake

Doth make thee part of *me*!

STRAFFORD.

O my dear master!

This honour and this love! Such joys, oft-times

Repeated, would—No more of me! My King:

You come to tell me what my heart foresees;

You yield to my request? You will confer

The noblest of all martyrdoms on Strafford?

KING [*after a pause*].

Such was my will. The truth be told at once!

Pym will destroy the Church if thou art saved;

Hath sworn to save it if thou diest. Power

Is his supreme o'er Lords and Commons: and

He never lies. I doubt not then that this

Is so.—And so decreed thy death, dear Strafford:

And hither came to bear myself this message.

But on my progress hither have my thoughts

Already changed their bent.

STRAFFORD.

Not so, my monarch !
Duty must vanquish love ! Or rather say,
Thy love for God must plead with louder voice
Than any earthly love—

KING CHARLES.

Yet list me, Strafford !
Thou art a faithful servant, as I know.
Can'st thou advise me then to rush upon
This fearful deed ? not only losing thee
My truest friend, but thereby all my life
To long remorse devoting ? Thou may'st think ;
Even if this course I take, urged by the hour
And its demands, in future years the thought
Of thy desertion will revive again,
And live, an aye undying scorpion here
Within my soul. Whatever chance to me
I shall no more be happy. Henceforth, Strafford,
A cloud is on my brow and on my being.
Whatever sunshine smile, a dull dense night
Will be upon me and around me ever.
I bid farewell then from this hour to joy,
To peace of conscience—self-approval—all

That makes life blest ! Can aught demand—now
speak

Thine inmost thoughts—thou know'st, I say not
half

Which I do feel,—can aught on earth demand
Such sacrifice ?

STRAFFORD.

The Church, Sire, is of Heaven !

Yet more. How should you feel such woes as these

By making me most blest ? O, my dear monarch !

Think you it is not martyrdom to die

For King and country ? Is not martyrdom

To loving souls of all earth's goals the highest ?

And howsoever rough my being seem

Thy grace would teach it love, thy loving goodness,

Were it more keen than all war's blasts. In truth

I shall rejoice in such a death. Thus cheered

By your sweet grace, it will be sweet to die,

In the sure hope of life beyond the grave

Where we may meet again !

KING CHARLES.

Ay, noble Strafford !

Thou may'st consent to die through loyal love;—
And true it is, the world will laud thy name
For thy pure rectitude of heart—but *mine* ?
My baseness in deserting thee—Oh, men
Will scorn me, and with right !—I cannot *speak*
The *cause* of such desertion. Seem I selfish ?
Yes I am weak, I own ; and aye must be so.
I cannot bear that all the hearts which loved me
Should be estranged—that those, whose friendship
ever

My heart esteemed most dear, should henceforth
deem

King Charles—a heartless coward. Shame, my
Strafford,

Is a dread heritage : which I must leave
Unto my children, if I thus desert thee !

STRAFFORD.

Desert me—O my King ? Ah ! would indeed
All earth did know thee as yon Heaven doth see
thee

Most saint-like pure, and good. Yet should I tell
thee

With my rude lips—the highest martyrdom,

Even that was borne on earth by Earth's One King
Of Kings—is earthly shame and scorn. The day
Will come, my King, when thou shalt stand before
The Heavenly Judgment-seat ; and thy accusers
Shall know thee spotless then, and quail—My King!
I need not speak of this. For me to teach thee,
Is as a child would prompt a sage. Believe,
It is my joy, my highest joy, to die !
I know, thou can'st not doubt. And for *thy Fame*—
The fate of England rests at stake—yet more,
The fate of God's own Church ! So I who else
Would die to shield that Fame, must bid thee stain it,
It may be for some months or years, in men's
Vain thoughts, by even that subject-life's surrender
Which ever was thine own !

KING CHARLES.

I know not, Strafford,
If I do err !—Whatever rests at stake,
Truth still is truth ! I should not quit its path,
Nor set my hand to that most lying sentence
Which thee condemns as Traitor.

STRAFFORD.

Sign it not then !

Let not this one slight obstacle endanger
Both State and Church. Grant some Commission
only
To others in thy name. This will suffice :
And shield thee from the guilt of seeming falsehood.
For inward truth—Heaven knows, and I too know
thee !

Once more—once more—Oh, let me not entreat
This loving boon in vain ! If I have ever
Deserved thy favours, give me in my death
The joy of shielding thee and England's throne
From danger.—Sire ! Such end will be most glorious,
Most blest !

KING CHARLES [*after a pause*].

My Strafford !—Fare thee well then,
If this must be—

STRAFFORD.

I thank thee ! and I bless thee !
Oh, may my blessings guard thy royal head !
Bless thou me too !

KING CHARLES.

Strafford, my generous servant,
My noble friend—go thou to deathless glory

In this world and the next! I bless thee, Strafford;
And, when before the Eternal's judgment-throne,
We meet, perchance the heart that tortures now
May think with joy, with pride, on this dark hour,
For thee and me! Farewell—farewell—farewell!
On earth for ever!

STRAFFORD [*struggling with his emotion*].

Yet one word! The world,
Pym and his friends, must know not thou hast been
With me! Thou must conciliate them, my King.
For those who should be thine are all too weak
To shield thee. I must needs some wonder show
When I the first more formal tidings hear
Of my near death.

KING CHARLES.

So be it, well-loved Strafford!
This too?—Oh, worse than martyrdom is mine!
For thee,—thou art, thou must be blest! And so,
Farewell! farewell! [*King departs hastily (L)*].

STRAFFORD [*kneeling*].

Shield him, my Saviour, ever!

[*Curtain falls.*]

ACT II.

JANUARY 1642.

SCENE I.

Secret Council-chamber of the Malignants or Puritans in Coleman Street.

PYM, HAMPDEN, HOLLIS, CROMWELL, YOUNG VANE, FIENNES, SIR ARTHUR HAZLERIG, STRODE, *and many other Puritans, &c. in hot disputation.*

YOUNG VANE.

UNHEARD of insolence ! They dare presume,
These Counsellors, this King, attaint a Pym,
A Hampden, Hollis, of High Treason ? Tush !
Our ears deceive us ! What we heard we heard
not !

They, who may bless our mercy, that they still
Preserve—

HAMPDEN.

Dear Vane, this zeal befits you well.
Yet be not hurried unto hasty words :
Think well, dear Vane ! You may expose yourselves
To dangers.

YOUNG VANE.

Dangers, borne for you, were pearls
Of price. But 'tis not so. Why speak of dangers ?
I laugh the thought to scorn. This peevish King !—
Nay—let him look t' himself !—

CROMWELL.

Such lowliness

As our great Hampden's doth befit the Lord's
Own servant. Meek of spirit—aye
Unglorying in the flesh : but we will blow
Like Joshua's trumpets loud defiance. Soon
The gates shall fall—

FIENNES.

Who knows though, how the King
Dreamt on such enterprise ?—I scarce had thought
That Hyde or Falkland would have dared advise
Aught fraught with danger. Yet they must, no
doubt.

HOLLIS.

No. Digby, he did all. The others, trust me,
Had little hand in it.

PYM.

Nor Digby much!—
Englishmen, I do think the King, King Charles,
Was his own prompter here.

HAMPDEN.

Ay, doubt it not!

HOLLIS.

And if he was, perchance, he had some cause;—
Some little cause!—

YOUNG VANE.

How mean you?

HOLLIS.

Why, you know,—
That virulent remonstrance—needless too—
He grants you all you wish, arrives from Scotland
In hope of some return for all: and then, just then,
You seize the bishops whom he loves as life,
Immure them; last, present this said address
In which you every old complaint renew,
Rekindle every grievance—

YOUNG VANE.

Hollis, Hollis,

Is this the hour to taunt us?—You're a friend
To freedom : that I know—or else your words
Would raise suspicions.—Why, in England's name,
What have we done amiss?—These insolent

Bishops!—

We do immure them. Well—they had deserved
A sterner fate. So let them thank our mercy!—
And as for this address—the King's a tyrant,
We told him so—we oped his ears to justice—
Will make him feel it too:—And now you taunt—
When this Charles Stuart attaints yourself and four
More trusty Englishmen for using breath
To speak God's truth.

CROMWELL.

God hardeneth the oppressor!

We have endured this vessel of his wrath—
How long!—

HAMPDEN.

You are resolved then, countrymen,
With due regards to your own lives and fame
To guard your friends?—If so, ye will unite—

YOUNG VANE.

In bidding all defiance to the King,
This very day.

HAMPDEN.

And if my voice might move,
As I in sooth have little claim, (yet God
Is mighty in the weak one—simple truth
Is all my boast—for wherein should I glory
Save God, and God alone?)—My countrymen,
If ye give ear to aught I urge, then may
This counsel meet your grace. Ye know that
Church,
Which most of us assembled here esteem
Of Babylon, I mean that Bishops' Church,
Wherein vile men assume the guise of Christ
And his high office,—this is the main rock,
The strong foundation of Malignancy.
If against this we now proceed, the King
Who else might taunt us, will be humbled soon.
Let us not rest content with such mere fragment
Of what is right—which even yet the Peers
Dare question—the expulsion of these Bishops
These foes to God from England's councils. Rather

Demand ye the destruction, root and branch,
Of that foul blot upon the land—that Church—
Rather that Charnel-house of Christ and Truth!—
Demolish it, and in its stead erect
A holy, chaste Assembly of God's children.
If ye do deem this counsel wise, forthwith,
This very day, proceed we to the task.

CROMWELL.

The Vineyard of the Lord must be renewed.
Purge ye the foxes thence!—

FIENNES.

Erect the banner

Of Israel!—

PURITANS [*confusedly*].

Break the Idols!—Ashtaroth
And Baal!—Spread the stakes of Holiness :
Spread wide!

PYM.

I ask a hearing.

PURITANS.

Pym would speak!

Hear Pym!—

PYM.

This must not be. The Lord hath deigned

Illuminate his servant ; and the time
Is not yet full for this completion ! Babylon
Shall perish in her harlotries : yet now
The measure of God's wrath is filled not. Pause
then !—

This hateful Church—this Type of Antichrist
Must yet be spared a little while. Ye ask me,
Watchman, what of the night ?—And I reply—
The light yet breaks not, but the dawn is near,
The morning breezes whistle rudely by,
And there is grayness in the Heavens. Wait yet !
Possess your souls with patience ! 'Neath the Altar
Of Holiness cry ye—and cease not ever,
How long, O Lord, holy and true, how long—
And peradventure soon these cries shall gain
Fit answer. For the present—now to speak
In carnal wise, I must admonish ye,
The friends of Babylon are strong, and many
Who would be yours will ye repel from ye
By such procedure at such hour. Suffice it,
If I have any sway in England's counsels—

CROMWELL.

If thou hast sway ?—We all are thine.

PURITANS.

All thine.

CROMWELL.

The Spirit of the Lord is strong upon thee :
Thou comest as from Bozrah, having trodden
The oppressors under foot !—

PYM.

Then do not deem
I would dissuade ye from most rigorous answer
To these malignant threatenings ! Even this day
I will to such conclusions urge the House,
As shall confirm the King, we fear him not ;
But are assured, resting in God's own hand,
And working his good work, we soon may purge
The Realm of all malignants ; gag at least
All saucy tongues ; and teach the Throne its duties !
Mayhap its lawful fears ?—

PURITANS.

God is with Pym !

And we !—and we !—

YOUNG VANE.

On to the House then straight !
The hour is come for action.

PURITANS.

To the House!—

CROMWELL.

Our Joshua lead us and his worthy brethren!

Let the Amalekites be crushed!

PURITANS.

Thou God

Of Judah, God of Hosts, be with us!—Hence!—

[*The Assembly disperses amidst great confusion. Scene changes.*]

SCENE II.

Chamber in the Royal Palace of Whitehall.

*The KING, LORD KEEPER LITTLETON, and ST.
JOHN in converse.*

ST. JOHN.

AND therefore, Sire, I say, a scheme so wild
As this, so vain—

KING CHARLES.

No more, Sir, I beseech you!

At least in such a tone. You may design

To serve me, but such arrogance of speech
Befits nor me to hear nor you to proffer.

ST. JOHN.

How should I speak, Sire, when your throne is thus
Set on the hazard? England's voice demands
Concession. You reply by the Attainder
Of England's best beloved—

KING CHARLES.

I will not hear
Such language. It reminds me that a St. John
Hath once held nearest counsel with those men
Whom I account my foes, and yet perchance
Is more their friend than mine.

ST. JOHN.

You wrong me, Sire,
And—be this as it may, if—if indeed,
I do not hate those patriots, still my counsel
Yields not less weighty truths. The English people
Are mighty—they demand the extirpation
Of every wrong. We may not hope to hush them
By mere bravade—far less by tyrant force.
The people will be heard—and Pym and Hampden

What are they but the people's mouthpieces ?
You must concede then to their fair demands
Fair hearing.

LORD KEEPER LITTLETON.

Or,—we'll grant, my gracious Sire,
That these men err, that in all pending questions
The true right rests with us, with Royalty,
Still power is theirs, as none can dare deny,
Most terrible ! None now dispute their pleasure ;
Our truest friends desert us. Was it meet then
At such an hour, with prospect of such dangers,
To risk your all on such a cast ? O Sire !
Retreat while yet 'tis time. Send to the Houses
Your gracious word through us, that this Attainder
Shall not proceed, that all things shall return
To wonted peace : and then the direful storm
Upgathering, may be scattered, quite averted,
The Throne of England saved.

ST. JOHN. .

Which else, remember,
May run dire risks ! For if this cloud should burst,
I cannot tell the issue ! None may tell !

But this we know, however sacred, Monarchy
May not for aye endure, and Monarchs' lives
Have in such brawls been perilled. They who slew
A Strafford, when they deemed such slaughter just,
Might scarcely spare more sacred heads. Then—

KING CHARLES.

Peace, Sir !

Such fears spring from no loyal breast. The Com-
mons

Might truly—but I will not trust myself
With words. Go, Sir, and say right plainly,
The King may not be awed ! I will conceive
You honest, since you seek for such construction.
No more ! From you, Lord Keeper, I had hoped
In other hours for other deeds : but Time
Is fraught with changes, and the leaves will cling
not

When blow the winter breezes. Else to you
I scarce should need to say ; His subjects' power
Combined with wrong may never fright their Mo-
narch

From his appointed duties.—Fare you well.
We shall take counsel with ourselves alone,

Or those we see uncowed by treason. [*In a lower tone*] St. John,

You reckon on our weakness. Rest assured,
Our eyes are on you. If we deem you faithless,
You fall to rise no more. No answer, Sir!

[*To both*] Away to your appointed tasks! Acquaint
Both Houses that their King demands the traitors!

[*Lord Keeper Littleton and St. John withdraw.*]

KING CHARLES [*alone*].

Base insolence! This St. John dares to threat me,
Presuming on his sway, and my reliance
Upon such knaves as he. Or knaves, or fools!
Ay, such are all my chosen counsellors,
With rare, most rare exceptions! Bitter words?
I grant you that—but is not bitterness,
The only fruit such wrongs as mine can ripen?
What have I done, what hath my country done,
To groan beneath vile traitors' sway?—Oh Heaven,
Forgive these cries! Our fathers may have sinned;
We too, alas! perchance, unwittingly
Have drawn this vengeance down.—Do I act rightly?
Did it befit me to behold my laws
Dishonoured, social order set at nought,

The very Church of God, her best and noblest
Doomed to destruction,—could I see all this,
And rest inactive still? I know full well
Nothing can glut these rebel tyrants' cravings
Save the prostration of my realm before them,
The sacrifice of all I swore to cherish,
To guard for ever. All their wildest prayers,
(Which recognised some law, some show of reason,)
All granted, I returned from Scotland hither
To meet—what? fresh requests! Day after day
More fiercely press they onward:—they require
The sole command of England's troops; they seize
My very sources of existence: plunge
Within the tower the Church's bishops—wherefore?
Because, (their very being hazarded
By the fierce mobs, set on by these smooth villains,)
They dared protest against that Parliament
Which would no means employ to guard its mem-
bers
Debarred from it by force. Ay—seized for this
Were Christ's own servants; cast within the dungeon!
And not a voice—no, not one single voice
In either House was raised to speak for *them*,

For *justice* ! save that one most daring man
Professed, he thought them only mad,—not traitors !
Thus were they sent, to share thy punishment,
Pure-minded, open-hearted Laud ! Thy zeal
For thy insulted King, and for the Church
Thy holy mother, at an earlier hour
Awaked these patriots' wrath ; and none were found
To succour thee : when, had true English courage
Inspired one English heart and tongue, perchance—
Yet no, I wrong thee, Hyde ! Thy fortune proves,
One man unaided cannot turn the tide
Of fate.—I have long hoped, have prayed some
 helpers
Might rise in danger's hour, to stay the torrent,
To roll it back, to kindle loyalty
In English hearts again. Amongst the Commons
Even now the larger half would shield their King,
Could they gain courage but to speak or think !
Yet as this might not be, what now remained,
Save by my own high royal power to quell
The hydra of sedition, to arrest
The torrent's course, to save my crown and realm,
And God's blest church ? This have I done, Heaven
 knows

With pure intent ! The laws shall judge these men :
Not I, but they, shall fix their due. Ha ! Digby ?
And in such haste ?

Enter LORD DIGBY.

LORD DIGBY [*entering*].

I used your signet, Sire,
To gain admittance, without ceremony.
Pardon my boldness !

KING CHARLES.

Speak, my faithful Digby !
What say the Lords and Commons ? Will they
yield
These five whom we attaint ?

LORD DIGBY.

I have no hope
Of their submission. For the Commons, Sire,
They loudly breathe defiance. They record
Already in their votes, the law shall never
Touch member of their body, till themselves
Have bade that law proceed. A fresh address
To Majesty, insultingly defying
Its legal powers, and once again renewing

Their own seditious calumnies, is now
Debated earnestly. The populace
Is gathering too from every side. Your foes
Proclaim you powerless. "None shall dare to touch
These patriots, whatsoe'er they speak or move!"
Such is the cry now rising—

KING CHARLES.

Say no more !

Words cannot aid us. I do see the hour
Is come for deeds. Give orders that a retinue
(Not over large—I would not have them think
We would by force o'ersway them,) hold them ready
To follow us to Westminster. Myself
Will from the House demand these five accused
For justice to decree their fate. No words !
This must be. Go ! Some little time may pass
Ere the due train assemble. Seek me here
When they await our orders. [*Exit Lord Digby.*
Righteous Heaven !

Seems this a tyrant's act ? A deed of power
Oppressive ? Thou dost know, necessity
In justice' cause, alone impels my will.
Yet some few moments may I seek perchance

For fitting patience, needful strength, from Heaven,
Within my closet! I shall know, must know,
If I be King, or but a name, this day. [Exit.

SCENE III.

Interior of the House of Commons, Westminster.

Many Members seated on either side. To the right, amongst others, PYM, HAMPDEN, FIENNES, CROMWELL, young VANE, &c. To the left, LORD FALKLAND, HYDE, SIDNEY GODOLPHIN, ST. JOHN, SIR HARRY VANE, &c. The Debate is being carried on.

HAMPDEN [*in continuation*].

THUS, Gentlemen, I will not say, we erred not ;
Only thus much. If Englishmen be bound
To silence in the Commons' house, if here
They cannot speak their grievances, nor dare
Redress their wrongs, then be this clearly known
As law and right, (if law,—if right,) that thus
Men may not be misled by what seems freedom

To freedom's honest course ! *If* this be so,
If England's Commons assembled here
Dare not pursue the path of right, and seek
To purify the realm, without incurring
The sentence of transgressors, be it known
Henceforth that England is a Monarchy
Despotic ! that its Ruler's Will is Law,
Which none may dare to challenge ! Hitherto,
We knew *not* this ; and thence, in sober truth,
I cannot deem the friends accused with me
More guilty than myself of any treason.
We have proclaimed the truth, and striven to quell
What we deemed falsehood. Understand me, Sirs,
I question not, *if* this King's Will be Law,
This may be made a crime : but could such sen-
tence
Be retrospective ? We *unwitting* erred.
I do appeal to the most loyal souls,
Whether such innocence accord with guilt ?
God reads our hearts—the God of Israel—
He knows mine pure of ill's intent. And there-
fore
Would I this loyal Declaration press

On all, for your unanimous assent.
You all do know, and Holy Writ assures,
If the least member suffer, all the body
Must share both grief and danger. Haste we then
To stay the King from such unwonted courses !
Place we the tenor of our wrongs before him,
Which may persuade him how to act ! I move,—
And I would gain no party triumph here,
But speak as Englishmen to loving brothers,—
That this Address, with voice unanimous
From all, for all, be placed before the King.

[Hampden seats himself.]

PURITANS AND MALIGNANTS.

The righteous Hampden !—Mild, and just, and
mighty !—
His will be done.

CAVALIERS OR ROYALISTS [*confusedly*].

Think you ?—This seems—In candour
I must avow—And yet the King's the King—
Patience, hear Sidney !

SIDNEY GODOLPHIN [*rises*].

Gentlemen, I rise,

—Though an unworthy Member, ill deserving
Your trust in me, by youth and inexperience
Oft tongue-tied,—to express my heart's assent
To what hath erst been spoken ! I have friends
Such words from me may wound : but at such hour
Silence or doubt were crime. The liberties
Of England are at stake. I cannot pause
Nicely to weigh the merits of the question ;
To canvass every word in this Address.
Enough. Our freedom of debate this day
Demands defence, which I for one withhold not.
I love my King, I trust I love my King :
His Counsellors perchance in this misguide him !
But even to angels would I yield not basely
My England's dear bought liberties. I pray
That no division shame our this day's counsels ;
But that our King be warned, for his own sake,
By his own royal Parliament !

[*Godolphin seats himself.*]

HAMPDEN.

Well said !

CAVALIERS.

My voice is with Godolphin's. Hyde—hear Hyde—
No !—freedom—England's Liberty—

PURITANS.

Is Saul

Amongst the prophets? Tremble, Babylon!

Thine hour is nigh.

HAMPDEN [*to young Vane aside*].

Take heed, dear Vane, take heed!

Your words may breed dissension yet.

YOUNG VANE.

The truth

At least be spoken! [*He rises*] Englishmen, Godolphin

Hath charged ye wake indeed with mickle cause.

Think for *what* cause we do debate this day.

Your bravest, wisest, noblest, England's pearls

Of honour, would the boar of tyranny

Rend with its monster tusks. It well befits

Great Hampden, in his simple innocence,

Fearing no ill, to speak thus patiently,

Thus calmly. We who see his life at stake,

With other lives as dear, we cannot rest

So tranquil. We must needs know indignation

At the bare thought of such demand as this,

Of such assault on five pure lives. 'Tis clear

The King would fright us, would constrain us
crouch

Like hounds to lick his feet. Such hounds we are
not !

Or if we are, let all who thus would whip us
With fell Oppression's goad, hold well their own ;
Lest in some moment of reviving courage
We flesh our teeth within their necks. O God,
O righteous God of Israel, shall we tremble
Beneath a tyrant's frown ? No, tell the King
We serve him as his subjects not his slaves.
We will not turn from our appointed task
To meet his humours, will not cease to cleanse
The Augean stall of state—and more, this Church !
It shall be freed from Dagon-worship—freed
From Papal mummeries. Bishops nevermore
Shall lord it o'er God's heritage. In fine,
We will not yield one single reformation
In State or Church, which here hath been designed.
Power shall be met by Power, and Craft by Wis-
dom.

None can o'erawe us, none shall dare beguile.
For noble Pym, for upright Hampden, Hollis,

For Strode, and Arthur Hazlerig—for England,
Whose majesty is now impugned, for one,
For all of us, I call upon ye, Sirs,
To bid defiance to this stern Oppressor!—
Who'er contests our right is fool or knave.

PURITANS [*loudly*].

The walls of Jericho are reeling now !
Heard ye the trumpets' blast ? Hail, righteous
Vane,
Brave Vane !

HYDE [*rising*].

I claim brief hearing, Gentlemen.

CAVALIERS.

Hear Hyde !—Speak, Hyde !

HYDE.

However strange may seem
My conduct, though a thousand voices join
Against me, though my fate be instant seizure,
And lifelong penance in the Tower, I rise
To speak my heart's true thoughts : I do believe
My King more sinned against than sinning. Grant
This act of his be ill-advised—even I

Oppose its execution—would not yield
The five Accused: rest we content, good Sirs,
With this refusal! Why demand we more?
Why this insulting paper place before
Our Monarch's eyes? Why thus anew rekindle
Flames long-extinguished now? For pity's sake,
I would entreat the House to pause. All friends
Of loyalty do I conjure with me
To yield resistance to this strange Address,
Well-meant, perchance, but ill conceived. Our
freedom
Needs not such stay as this, and it befits us
To prove, that though constrained to disobey,
We still do love our Monarch!

[*Hyde seats himself.*]

CAVALIERS.

Nobly spoken!—
Fore George—I vote with Hyde. And I. And I.
—Freedom and Loyalty!

ST. JOHN [*rises*].

I cannot let
The brief remarks of this most zealous gentleman
Pass without note or comment. Of the Crown

Appointed Minister, it rests my duty
To guard its interests ever. Therefore I,
For the King's sake, entreat this wise Assembly
Not rashly the misjudged miscalled Address
Before you to reject. The King must know
Your firm resolve. I in his name demand
An absolute answer. Either yield his suit,
Or send such full reply as shall convince him
Threats may not work his purpose. Otherwise
He may resort to louder threats, and these
Entail ill-omened deeds, all unavailing
Since you *are* thus resolved. Once more I say,
Let your full bent be known, that so, your King
And mine may not act blindly. Royalists,
I call on you—and all I trust are such—
To aid me in conveying truth, plain truth,
To your liege Lord and Monarch ! [*Seats himself.*]

CAVALIERS [*confusedly*].

There's no choice !—

It must be—St. John errs not—let the King
Know all—we'll not deceive him—Tush ! I vote
With Hyde—Still Hyde !—Be stedfast !

PYM [*rises*].

Gentlemen,

I too would crave your hearing. There are limits
To all appointed Power. True loyalty
Degenerates ne'er to serfage. But if we,
If Hampden here, and Hollis, all we five
Accused, be sacrificed, think you henceforth
One man will breathe in safety in this England !
If not, it ill befits an Englishman
To waive the loudest protest 'gainst such deed
Of violence. I feel that England's fate
Hangs on the balance now. Could our five lives
Save England, I would bless the axe descending
To end them even this hour. But 'tis not so !
No, we must live, dear friends, must live for Eng-
land—
Not die !—perchance the lighter task !—for oh !
What deeds, the thought of which we dread our-
selves,
Far grasping Tyranny may force us on !—
My friends, I well may think that in this hour
The spirits of the mighty dead who fell
For liberty may throng this hall to list
Our consultation. Fate of unborn ages

May rest on our resolve. One pause of doubt,
Of seeming fear, and all is lost ! Thenceforth
Is England chained for ever ! Wake, then, wake
Unto the dread occasion of the hour !
Saints of the Lord and lovers of your country !
Unite as one, to work the will of Heaven !

*[An anxious murmur has crept along the Pu-
ritan ranks. Fiennes, who sits next Pym,
whispers to him.]*

FIENNES.

King Charles is nigh to seize you, with a host
Of followers ! You must fly.

PYM.

We *will* withdraw !—

[Aloud] Not trembling, as convicted malefactors,
Quit we this hour your senate's halls. The bravest
May yield awhile to Tyrant Power, and thus
Their brethren shield from risk of loss through
them.

We do withdraw awhile, and leave ye to
Your counsels. Only rest ye still assured,
This hour confirms the liberties of England,
Or lays them ever low. Your only weakness
Can lie in self-mistrust. Be bold, brave friends !

Then Heaven shall bless your deeds, and Tyranny
Shrink baffled from your presence. God protect
ye!—

*[Pym, Hampden, Hollis, Strode, and Arthur
Hazlerig leave the House, amidst great com-
motion.]*

PURITANS *[confusedly]*.

Our shield and buckler is the Lord!—In vain
The Wicked bends his arrows. Praise the Lord!—
O thou false tongue—that wickedly, spitefully
Dost wound the righteous—King of Babylon,
Thine hour is come!—

A PURITAN.

Against the Lord of Hosts
Belshazzar boasted him! The hand went forth—
Mene—Tekel—Upharsin!

CROMWELL *[rising]*.

Men and brethren,
I do beseech ye, hear me, for the Spirit
Doth move my tongue to utterance. Hitherward
The Oppressor hastes! When he doth speak to us,
When he demands our brethren, let us yield

No answer—none! So shall our godly silence
Seem to his carnal ears more terrible
Than shouts of armed warhosts! List we all
His words, and in our heart of hearts reply we,
“How is the Oppressor fallen! He hath come
To sue our aid. We trusting in the Lord
Will set at nought his malice.” Men and brethren,
Your servitor hath spoken.

PURITANS.

Godly Cromwell!—

The Lord is with him! Ha, the King! the King!
In silence stern receive him!

Pause. Then enter the KING, followed by LORD DIGBY, and Retainers, who remain at the entrance. The KING steps forward, and mounts to the President's chair, which its owner has deserted, from which he gazes round the Assembly. Profound silence reigns.

KING CHARLES [*half aside*].

They are not here!

[*To the House*] I grieve the occasion, Sirs,
Of your King's presence. Yesterday I sent
For those, whom I have charged with treason. You·

Replied, with no obedience, but a message.
I must declare to you no King of England
Can be more careful of your privilege
Than I. But Treason cannot claim its use.
Therefore I come to tell you plainly, Sirs,
That I must have these men. I see they now
Are flown, and thence my search is useless here.
Should they return, I shall expect you, Sirs,
To send them to me straight. And I assure you
I do intend no force against these men,
But such proceedings as your laws commend
Most honourable. Let me add too this,
Since for the moment I have failed my purpose;
I have no will, no thought, to work you harm :
Whatever for your good my tongue hath granted
And for my people's good, that do I swear
To execute : and so, God keep you ever !—

[*The KING passes slowly and with dignity towards the entrance.*

Confused Cries from the House.

Privilege ! Privilege !

CROMWELL [*in the foreground, aside*].

King Charles, I hate thee !—

That hate *my* soul shall kindle ; *others'* souls
Shall also light with fire divine !—perchance
Shall lead—Whither, weak erring fancy, stray'st
thou ?

Down, down, unruly thoughts !—Jehovah, reign !

Confused Cries from the House.

Privilege !—Pym and Hampden !—England !—
Freedom !— [*Scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

Street in the City. Twilight.

*A confused rabble constantly augmenting throngs
the street.*

CITIZEN.

I TELL ye I beheld him with these eyes.
The King speeds hither !

SECOND CITIZEN.

Wherefore ?—What's his object ?

THIRD CITIZEN.

We are no Papists. Here he'll scarce find friends.

PURITAN.

Say, rather, haters ! Lies he not in wait
Like to a lion in his den ? to catch
The poor, to persecute the true of heart ?

CITIZENS.

Stand by the Parliament !—For Pym and Hamp-
den !—

APPRENTICE.

'Tis time, my masters !—Ireland have they sacked,
These Papists : well, we know who laid the plot !
And England too—

PURITAN.

Mourn, mourn in dust and ashes,
Jerusalem !—Drew not King Ahab's sins
The ancient vengeance down ?—

FOURTH CITIZEN.

King Ahab's sins ?—
Now, Sir, you wrong our King. I own he errs ;
But he hath grace—was ever kind—

THIRD CITIZEN.

Such kindness
As shews the vulture to the dove !—What Papist,
What vile Malignant have we here ?

CITIZENS.

Secure him—

The slave and traitor !

OTHERS.

Tear him limb from limb !

PURITAN.

Arise, O Lord !—Ark of our Strength, arise,
And save this city ! Let the lying lips
Be silenced in the grave !—This royal Saul—

SECOND APPRENTICE.

He comes—the King !

FIFTH CITIZEN.

No, younker, no !—His worship
Our tyrannous Lord Mayor, with all his train
Of Counsellors,—they only hither press.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Receive them with due anger ! Let them know
What 'tis to rouse the people !

SECOND PURITAN.

Vile Philistine !
We still have slings and pebbles. David's soul
Is mighty yet in us.

CITIZENS [*tumultuously*].

Down with all Tyrants !

Pym—Hampden—Hollis—Parliament—

*Enter the LORD MAYOR, SIR RICHARD GOURNEY,
followed by some few members of the Common
Council, the City Sheriffs, &c.*

SIR R. GOURNEY.

Good friends—

The Cries redouble.

Pym—Hampden—Parliament—We'll live and die
For Freedom. Down with Tyrants !

SIR R. GOURNEY.

Down with Tyrants ?

Why so shout I, good Masters !—Englishmen
Should all be free—

CROWD [*tumultuously*].

Hear him !—The Members !—Privilege !

SIR R. GOURNEY [*with a loud voice*].

We claim for all the privilege of justice,
And ne'er a man of us would wish for more.—
Think you if any peer of England's realm
Should machinate against your peace, my friends,

The peace of England—Privilege should serve
him ?

Your King, who hates all tyranny, who loves
With a true heart his people, even now
In the Guildhall has laid his wrongs before us
And asked our loyal aid. We told him, crowds
Who knew not half his goodness thronged the way,
Thence counselled we return by water. He
With royal zeal replied, "I love my people,
And through their ranks will pass, or nevermore
Behold Whitehall again."—Now hither comes he,
Confiding in your loyalty. Good friends,
Let him have cause to know you're Englishmen
With English hearts. He ever loved your city.
Proffer some faint return for all his goodness,
And greet him on his course !

THIRD CITIZEN.

We will do so.

After his high deserts !

PURITAN.

Take up thy proverb
Against the king of Babylon, and say,
The fir trees shall rejoice at thee, the cedars—

FIFTH CITIZEN.

Now comes the King indeed !

APPRENTICE.

'Tis he !

THIRD CITIZEN.

Receive him

With due acclaim ! Swell ye the chorus, Masters !

CITIZENS [*tumultuously*].

The Parliament ! Down—down with tyranny !

Live the five Patriots ! Privilege !

*Enter KING CHARLES, followed by LORD DIGBY
and Retainers.*

SIR R. GOURNEY [*to the crowd*].

Stand back !

Press not on God's Anointed !

CROWD [*even more loudly*].

Privilege !

The Members ! Down with Tyrants !

KING CHARLES [*stepping forward*].

Pause awhile,

Good Gentlemen !—[*To the crowd*].—Am I the

Tyrant, friends,

Of whom ye speak ? [*General silence.*] See, I am
 come amongst ye,

To show, that I rely on your affections !

And these alone ! I seek no other guard.

A score of followers scarce is with me. Friends,
The tidings of your fears have worked me sorrow :
Whence may these spring ? I have accused even
 now

Some men of treason. If your laws, the laws
Of England, deem them innocent, their safety
Shall forthwith be assured. I will not think then
That you could shelter these accused amongst you.
Others, *my* nearest friends, at the demand
Of even these men now charged, have stood *their*
 trial.

Why should not they in turn ? I know that justice
Is dear to English hearts—and seek from you
What you would all expect as due from me.

So much to end these needless fears is spoken.

May Heaven preserve me as I seek your good,
And England's good as well ! [*To his train.*] Set
 onward, Sirs !

My good Lord Mayor, farewell !

SIR R. GOURNEY.

Pardon me, Sire,
I crave my right, as Guardian of the City,
Awhile to follow in your train.

KING CHARLES.

True servant !
Act as you will in this.—To all, farewell !
I shall expect in you a loyal people—
And you shall find in me a loving King !

*[The King and Train, accompanied by the
Lord Mayor, &c. depart.]*

FIFTH CITIZEN.

Beshrew my heart ! But the King means all fairly.

OTHERS.

Ay, does he, Masters !

PURITAN.

Honeyed is his tongue,
Poison of asps beneath his lips lies hid.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Let not a few soft words degrade us all
To slaves. The Patriots shall not die. We'll save
them !

So tell the King! Follow him! With your cries
At least assail him!

SECOND PURITAN.

Let your war-shout be
The words of Israel to Rehoboam!
So shall the King know, *we* will serve *him* only
While *he* doth serve the Lord.

CROWD [*confusedly*].

Hence!—Privilege!
The Patriots—Hampden—Pym—For England!
Freedom!

[*Whilst the Mob follows the King tumultuously,
the Scene closes.*]

SCENE V.

Chamber in the Royal Palace of Whitehall. Evening.

QUEEN *enters hastily from the left, followed by
Ladies, &c.*

QUEEN.

AGAIN these crowds assemble! Charles, dear
Charles,

Perchance thy life's at stake. Knows no one
tidings?

PAGE [*from the right*].

All is confusion round the Palace, Madam.
The mob is gathering—

QUEEN.

Thou must pass through them,
My own dear husband!

SECOND PAGE [*entering*].

From the city, Madam—
A messenger.

QUEEN.

Bid him approach!—Great Heaven!
He comes perchance—What bring'st thou?

[*To the Messenger, who has been ushered into
the chamber from the right.*]

MESSENGER.

From the King
Assurance, Madam, of his swift return.
Crowds had beset him, but his royal grace
So moved their stubborn hearts, that even the
roughest
Did him fair courtesy. He's near.

QUEEN.

Thanks, thanks,
Thou Blessed Virgin ! thou hast heard my prayers.
And he returns—is safe ! His royal grace
Hath moved their hearts ! O Charles, my dear,
 dear husband,
Now am I proud of thee ! Thou art indeed
A King. This royal valorous deed of thine,
This firm demand for justice 'gainst thy foes,
These traitors,—this commands my admiration
Though all the world condemn ! And thou must
 conquer.
Nought but thy fear to shed thy subjects' blood
Hath placed thee in such perils. Thou hast waked !
Henceforth a brighter future thee and me
Shall gladden ! Haste even now that I may tell
 thee
How much I love thee for this firm resolve !
Yes—yes—the lion lay couchant in thy nature.
Or—let me seek a nobler image here !
The light that ever shone, though calmly, mildly,
If waves and winds assail, can shoot aloft
And drive afar all foes.—Thou wakest, Charles !
Ha ! St. John !

Enter the Solicitor General, ST. JOHN. (R.)

ST. JOHN.

Madam—I would crave of you
A moment's audience—and alone. Its matter
Concerns your husband and my monarch—highly;
It brooks not of delay.

QUEEN [*to her Ladies, &c.*]

Withdraw, good friends,
Beyond our hearing! [*They obey.*]

Now, Sir, for your secret!

ST. JOHN.

Secret I scarce may call it—yet the words
Which I would speak—none save yourself should
hear.

QUEEN.

Speak swiftly then. I count you as my foe,
And have no ear to list your warnings long.
Not for one moment—were my fate alone
At stake!

ST. JOHN.

It is not, Madam.—That of Charles
My Monarch, also, now—but to the point!
Count me or friend or foe—the words I speak

Are sober truth. You do rejoice, perchance,
In what you think your royal husband's prowess?

QUEEN.

I do—I do! and wish his Christian pity
Had not so long enchained his will!

ST. JOHN.

Ay, Madam,
I guessed your ardour. You perchance are one
Who wooed the King to this demand.

QUEEN.

Not so.

His own desire impelled him.

ST. JOHN.

Whatsoe'er
Or cause or motive here,—so much is certain.—
You seal our Monarch's fall, if you incite him
To further progress in such course. His friends
Are one and all estranged. This hour will give
Sure proof, when one and all disdain his summons
To join his Council here. The Puritans
Are up in arms—and fearful murmurs, Madam,
Creep round from ear to ear. His very life
And yours may be endangered!

QUEEN.

Charles's life ?

ST. JOHN.

The axe that slew a Strafford, may perchance,
Salute his master ! Thus they cry. Believe not
That these are idle threats. I do repeat,
Not even Hyde or Falkland will be found
To join the royal counsels. Would you save
Your husband, then entreat him to recede
From this rash course. Nay, would you serve him
truly,

You would do more than this—reproach him even
For such wild rashness—in your children's name
And yours ! You know him ofttimes slow to act
And patient, but when once to anger goaded
Not easily dissuaded from his purpose.

If he pursues this course—and I do think
Such is his firm-fixed will,—I cannot promise
Another sun shall rise on England's King.
Sedition's seeds are sown around. One hour
May breed a poisonous harvest. Far and wide
The train is laid. Let it but burst this night—
And then the Monarch's throne—

QUEEN.

You do amaze me !

ST. JOHN.

Doubt, then, and seal his fall ! It rests with you
To save or doom him. Now with joy receive,
Applaud him—nought will turn him from his goal !
And he is lost—with you—with England's crown,
Your children !—Force yourself to seeming anger,
Chide him for this rash daring—let him think
On his four children—he shall live to bless you !
Doubt not, or work his death ! I leave you, Madam,
To act as true, not selfish, love may prompt you !

[*Bows and Exit. (R.)*]

QUEEN.

Stay, St. John !—Guide me, Heaven ! O Charles,
dear Charles !

Must I receive thee thus ? Yet for thy sake,
Thy children's sake—Lie still, weak heart !

PAGES.

The King !

LADIES, ETC.

Ah, praised be Heaven !

QUEEN.

Thou Blessed Virgin, aid me !

KING CHARLES *enters, followed by Officers of the Court, &c. from the background.*

KING CHARLES [*in entering*].

Say ye? Nor Hyde nor Falkland here? Ye err!
It cannot be. I prayed their presence.

OFFICER.

Sire,

They could not come. Such was their only answer !

KING CHARLES.

Good God ! Such, Falkland's answer ? Such, Hyde's
answer ?

Now too, at such an hour, when hasty action
Might save the State. I cannot seize the Traitors,
I have no power—no means *alone*. And Hyde ?
He faithless too ? It cannot be. And yet—
I sought not for his counsel in this deed
Knowing his over-caution. This hath moved him
To anger—false he cannot be ! Kind Heaven !
Save thou such souls as his—let them not sink
In this wide general deluge of all faith,
All honour, loyalty ! Oh at this hour

Much might he do to aid me ! Falkland too !
Yet I could scarcely hope *his* presence. O,
My Saviour, grant thy patience to thy servant !—
The Lords of Holland and of Essex then—
They, by their duties bound, must come. Approach
they ?

PAGE.

Even now a messenger—

KING CHARLES.

From them ? A messenger ?

Not they in person ?

PAGE.

They do hold their lives
In danger, fear to seek Whitehall, have gone
To yield the angry citizens assurance
That they do mean them well—

KING CHARLES.

But of themselves
They think then ! They desert me ! Henrietta,
[*Approaching the Queen, who has stood apart
concealed by her ladies.*

I saw thee not. I find in thee at least
True sympathy : though all the world abandon,

Dear wife, thou dost commend me as I know.

QUEEN [*speaking with difficulty*].

Charles—for thy children's sake—my sake, turn,
turn,

From this rash course! Thou see'st, thy bootless zeal
Hath all but wrought thy ruin—yet may work
Our deaths—thy death. I must reproach thee,
Charles—

Nor can I trust thy love for me or mine
Till thou dost yield thy purpose—dost recall
This dread attainder. For a while farewell.
I leave thee to thy thoughts. [*Aside.*] If I should
linger

One moment more—Hence! hence!

[*Exit (L.) followed by her ladies.*]

KING CHARLES [*after a pause*].

My wife too?—I

Am all alone then!—am alone? Not so!

GOD is still with me! I am *not* deserted.

[*Curtain falls.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Interior of the House of Lords in Westminster Hall.

Many Peers occupy the Ministerial and Opposition Benches. Amongst the former, are LORD KEEPER LITTLETON, DUKE OF RICHMOND, EARLS OF MONMOUTH, SOUTHAMPTON, and BRISTOL, LORD NEWARK, LORD CAPEL, &c. Amongst the latter, the EARLS OF NORTHUMBERLAND, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, HOLLAND, &c. MR. PYM, attended by a Deputation from the House of Commons, consisting of HAMPDEN, FIENNES, Young VANE, and CROMWELL, is pleading at the Bar of the House.

Confused clamour of applause and disapprobation.

WISE counsel!—Let Malignants tremble!—
Insults

To England's Peers!—The People's rights!—No!
Treason!—

PYM [*when the tumult has subsided, in continuation*].

I tell your Lordships, these Petitions, which
I now present to you, demand but justice !
In them you hear the voice of mighty England,
Or rather say, the *Cry* ! You need not wonder
If the extreme occasion of the times
Lead to some vehemence of speech. The agony
In which our kingdom labours is so dread,
So universal, every part alike
Is by these terrors overwrought. And whence
Proceed such ills ? Whence, but from that fell
Faction,
Those vile Malignants, who obstruct the course
Of justice ? Never yet did Church require
Such sweeping reformation as this realm's :
But while the Bishops and corrupter Clergy
Continue in their power, there is slight hope
Of such long wished-for freedom. In a word,
The Commons labour to attain the good
Of England ; but a factious party, here
And elsewhere, dares obstruct their labours.—'Till
The officers of England's brave militia

Be by true men appointed, it were vain
To hope for peace. And yet Malignants breathe,
Papists, and those who herd with them, who dare
Dispute the will of England—dare confirm
These great appointments in the foes to freedom.
Let these beware ! The hour of vengeance comes.
Let not too long the most malignant linger
To yield assent to the demands of justice !
They shall but seal their fall.—For us, the Com-
mons,

We shall rejoice if England's Peers awaking
Combine with us to save the realm ! But should
They fail, we yet will shrink not from our duty ;
And England's great historians of the future
Shall tell Posterity, that, at such crisis,
In such extremity, the Commons only
Performed their part, while England's noble
Peers
Shrank from their task, from lack of sense or cou-
rage !—

[*After a short pause.*]

The *People's* needs I bring before the House,
And press immediate consultation on them.

PEERS [*confusedly*].

Most wisely spoken!—Somewhat freely!—Well!—
The truth is truth!—Our thanks!—

EARL OF BRISTOL [*aside to the Duke of Richmond*].

Nay, calm your Grace!

At such a moment speech would only madden
These lawless rebels.

DUKE OF RICHMOND [*in reply*].

Scoundrels!—dogs!—By Heaven,
I have no words to speak mine ire. They dare
In our own presence stigmatize as foes
To England, as Malignants, all who aid not
Their every hell-born project! Can no insult
Awake a spark of fire in English breasts?—
Shall we be trodden on, and humbly kiss
The feet that crush us?

EARL OF HOLLAND [*rising*].

Thanks, most worthy Sir,
Thanks, honest, truly loyal, Master Pym,
For this well-urged oration. As I trust,
Such words may move the hearts of all who hear
To timely counsels. We will haste forthwith

To enter on the projects you would forward
In England's name; of England's cry, for which
You have this day laid vouchers high before us.
We do entreat your kindly thoughts of us,
With those of the most loyal gentlemen
Who stand beside you.—May the Commons find
Sure friends in England's Peers!

LORD KEEPER LITTLETON [*rising*].

Kind Sirs, farewell.

In the Crown's name we thank you.

[*Pym, Hampden, &c. withdraw.*]

EARL OF HOLLAND.

Now proceed we
To quick debate on this most weighty question;
The placing of the fortresses of England
In *trusty hands*, such as our worthy friends
The Commons may approve, and further vesting
The whole militia of this loyal kingdom
In well-affected officers. Delay—

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

I cannot, will not brook this insolence,
This folly! [*rises*] I, my Lords, demand the
House

Pass to the Order of the Day. Myself
Precedence claim. My motion stands recorded,
Nor can the “loyal” Commons’ entrance here
Affect my vested rights. For these petitions,
They in their course may claim observance due:
But ill consorts it with our dignity
To set aside the order of debate
For insolent complainings like to these,—
For most malignant (*I will use the word*
With juster aptness) taunts and insults, rendered
By scum of earth!

Cries.

Ha! Treason!—Madness!—Frenzy!
Retract!—retract!—

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

I will not. Liberty
Of speech I claim, such as a burghess here,
A Pym, hath dared usurp this hour.

Cries.

—Retract!—

He’s mad!—

LORD KEEPER LITTLETON [*aside to those around
him.*]

What? dare at such an hour oppose

The wish of Pym ? He seals his ruin—ours—
All England's !

EARL OF MONMOUTH.

Heaven ! We're lost.

EARL OF BRISTOL.

He is imprudent.

Yet have the Peers of England fallen so low,
Reply to would-be rebels seems mere frenzy ?

LORD CAPEL.

They have, they have, wise Bristol ! 'Tis in vain
To stem the torrent.

EARL OF ESSEX [*rising*].

We demand, his Grace
Retract such words, for England's sake, *our* sake !
Lest the insulted people, in their ire,
Inflict on us dire vengeance—indiscriminate,
In patriot wrath !

Cries.

Retract !—Retract !

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Once more,
I will not ! What I said was rightly said.

If any be malignant, not with me
The term took origin, not *they* are so
Who love their King and would preserve their
country

From worse than lawless frenzy. I resume.
Proceed we to this day's appointed purpose :
Examine we the grounds of accusation
Against a Peer of England, founded on
His reckless progress through the streets of King-
ston

In coach with six—ay, six fierce steeds ! My
Lords,

Most dread and warlike armament is this :
On which right lawfully and loyally
A charge of deadly treason hath been founded !—
This from the most alarming tenor then
Of the dread charge, requires our instant care,
Lest these wild steeds should plunge in frenzy's ire,
Even through the Commons' halls ! O think, my
Lords,

What awful perils to both State and *Commons*,
(By far the greater of the twain !) lie couched
In this.

[*Slight ironical laughter from the Ministerial Benches. Loud and increasing Murmurs from the Opposition.*]

EARL OF HOLLAND [*to those around him*].

'Tis true. He hath the right to press
His motion first upon us. Yet this must
Be stayed. 'Twere madness dully to expose
Our sacred cause to ridicule.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

My Lords,
I move for a Committee to examine
Into this treasonous rebel-act ! Proceed we
Forthwith to their appointment.

EARL OF ESSEX [*in a low tone*].

Thou, Northumberland,
First give the signal.

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND [*rising*].

Since his Grace persists
In this demand, I move, the House adjourn !

Loud Cries from the Opposition.

Adjourn ! adjourn !

DUKE OF RICHMOND [*to his friends*].

Ay, see you, how they silence
The voice of truth!—

EARL OF BRISTOL.

Dear friend, your course is noble,
But it will seal your ruin.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Think you so?
Why, even now they fear!
Cries from the Opposition, ever increasing in violence.

Adjourn! adjourn!

DUKE OF RICHMOND [*loudly*].

With all my heart, adjourn to Doomsday, or
For six months at the least!—

EARL OF HOLLAND.

Hark! Treason! Treason!

Opposition Cries.

He would destroy the realm!—Vile treason!—

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND [*rising*].

With
Your leave, I move, this House should rise not now

Until the Duke explain his words' intent ;
In thus a motion urging, which would seal
The ruin of the state !—He asks adjournment—
For six whole months.—

Cries.

Explain !—Demand like this
Is worse than treason !

EARL OF BRISTOL [*aside to the Duke*].

Say you made no motion !—
Yield them not power to seize you on aught pretext
As traitor to the State !

Cries.

Explain !—Expel the Duke !
Attaint him !—

DUKE OF RICHMOND [*again rising*].

Good, my Lords, these words of mine
Were spoken on the moment's provocation
As private comments.—How can man conceive
A motion in such words ?—I scorn to say
I meant them not as such.—

EARL OF HOLLAND [*rising*].

Howe'er this be,

A proposition fraught with ills so dire
May not *in jest* be proffered. We who guard
The liberties of England, dare not let
Such motion pass without most scrupulous
Enquiry.—I demand his Grace be bade
Withdraw, while we his purport question.

EARL OF BRISTOL [*rising, very warmly*].

Never!—

O my good Lords, you cannot yield to this?—
Such tyranny—

LORD LITTLETON [*rising hastily*].

He too will seal his ruin!—

Forgive a friend's entreaties! The good Earl
Is overwrought by friendship. For the sake
Of lasting peace, yield we this one demand,
And let the Duke withdraw! I nothing doubt
Few hours will prove his innocence. Meanwhile—

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

No; I demand a hearing!—

Cries [*confused*].

Hear him!—Cast
Him forth in Freedom's name! in England's!—

EARL OF ESSEX.

Never

Such daring words as his be spoken here
Again!

EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

Some signal punishment.

LORD CAPEL.

And *Pym*?Should *he* pass free?—

CONFUSED CLAMOUR.

Expulsion—Treason—Hear him!—

Malignants—Loyalty—Adjourn—Attaint!—

*[All the Peers have risen, and press around or
towards the Duke of Richmond, who stands
unmoved. Great and long continued Tumult,
on which the scene closes.]*

SCENE II.

Vestibule of the House. Westminster.

PYM, HAMPDEN, YOUNG VANE, FIENNES *and*
CROMWELL *in converse.*

*The Clamour continues for some time to be heard
from within.*

CROMWELL.

A GODLY service hast thou this day rendered,
Great Pym! Thy words have wrought dissension
'midst

The locusts of the land. It passes doubt,
This most malignant son of Edom, this
Last hope of Babylon, "His Grace" of Richmond
Falls even this day—this hour!—

FIENNES.

And then the Lords
Will scruple not to work our will.

YOUNG VANE.

This Richmond
Was the Malignant's only stay. Deprived

Of him, they'll feel the game already lost,
Feel that God's sentence hath gone forth, and so
Yield prompt compliance.

PYM.

Nothing, friends, is done
Till all be done!—Such be our peace-cry ever!—
Remember ye, when Saul the Amalekites
Had slaughtered, so the Lord's behest obeying:
In that he slew not Agag, Samuel said,
“Thou hast rebelled against the Lord thy God,
And so shalt rule not Israel.” Think we, friends,
On this!—Until the whole militia's power
Be vested in our hands, we may not pause
In our demands. What though this Bishop's bill,
So long on hand, for cancelling their share
Of temporal majesty, and driving them
From England's Parliament, as fell Malignants,
Be past the Lords at last—yet nought is won,
Till this militia bill shall seal our triumph.
The King too—yet we know not, if discretion
Will teach him yield assent—even to this first,
This Bishop's bill!—If not, his Parliament
Must act without him!—

HAMPDEN.

That were dangerous !

I do not mean to urge, the want of precedent
Would work *prevention* in such case. Yet surely,
If we can gain our end by usual ways,
We had as well avoid all strained recourse
To unaccustomed forms. The English people
Should aye be gently led. They have a love
Of ancient customs, we had better far
Draw profit from, than openly resist.

YOUNG VANE.

But how—

PYM.

Let Hampden speak ! If I do err not,
He, aye so gentle and so seeming-mild,
Hath run before us all. Is it not so ?
What godly project hast thou, righteous Hampden,
To aid our cause ? to move the King to yield ?

HAMPDEN.

From you what should I hide ? You are myself !
I love the place where the Lord's honour dwelleth,
And such conceive your souls. Thus, plainly, then,
You know the King's uxorial dotage : how

This Papist woman's life is dearer far
To him than England's honour. We have proofs,
As you do know, of her most treasonous
Designs, against our liberties—for which
Her life might well be questioned.

PYM.

True, good Hampden.

HAMPDEN.

Well, then, by means of these proved sins of hers,
Which place her (in a fashion) at our mercy—
You do conceive me?—

CROMWELL.

Verily!—

HAMPDEN.

We may
Perchance, persuade the King, even for her sake
To yield assent to our desire. A friend,
Who knows our thoughts and knows the Queen as
well,
Bears such plain warnings to her, such averments
Of what may soon befall—as scarce can fail
To move—God knows I act for Israel's good,
And for the Lord's high glory. Ye approve me?

PYM.

Most worthy Hampden, thou hast saved thy country !
This cannot fail !

YOUNG VANE.

And shall not !—If it do
We'll make your warnings true. The Queen's
Attainder
Must follow ere a week hath past.

PYM.

It shall so !—

CROMWELL.

The Moabitish woman in her harlotries
Shall perish !—

Enter STRODE hastily from the right.

YOUNG VANE.

Strode ?—

STRODE.

Dear Pym and Hampden ! Vane !
Come to *our* House I pray you ! You are needed,
Much needed. That most insolent malignant,
Sir Ralph—

PYM.

Ha !—Hopton ?

STRODE.

Even he ;—he said

But now, we went too far to charge the King
“ With rank apostasy.” His friends, methinks,
Gain courage from his boldness. Come, dear

Hampden,

Come, eloquent Vane, come Pym, thou first of all!
And silence this Malignant !—

PYM.

Be it so !—

Bide here, friend Cromwell !—Hold thou watch
awhile,

How this intestine conflict of the Lords
Finds end—if Richmond be expelled or no.
Come, guards of England’s liberties !

[*To Cromwell.*

Friend, leave not
Thy post appointed.—

CROMWELL.

I obey—the Lord,
Through you, commanding !—

YOUNG VANE.

Haste ! We'll crush this Hopton !

[*Exeunt Pym, Hampden, Strode, Young Vane
and Fiennes.*]

CROMWELL [*alone, after a long pause*].

Ay, if the Spirit's voice deceive me not,
(God is not man to lie) then am *I* destined
To higher tasks than this,—attendance on
A Pym !—and yet that Pym is *called*—I doubt not—
Why envy ?—*Yet*, my hour will come.—Of old
Obeyed not Joshua, when the voice of Moses
Enforced the Lord's decrees ? his lusty vigour
Did he with pious will subordinate,
Waiting the hour of rule. That hour did dawn !
Hence, carnal longings, that would tempt me *now*
To claim preeminence !—I do foresee—
However long delayed—the strife is nigh—
The war of brother against brother, deadly,
Decisive !—Though these men with whom I stand,
Whom I do follow, think all power is theirs,
Yet well I know, dark Hell is not subdued.
Yet Lucifer shall rise again, to war

Against the Saints !—When gains the King resolve,
(Weak idle dreamer !) when he musters courage
To bid the Saints defiance, even that hour,
The fools, now tongue-tied, who *would* aid the cause
Of darkness, will with all their *arms*' endeavours
Seek to approve their stubborn hate to Heaven !
I know them. Then my hour at last shall come.
I have not words. My very utterance
Hath rough impediment—but in war I think
To serve the Lord of Hosts—to overthrow
The Idols—smite the foes of Israel !—
Such be my task appointed !—Those who now
On me think lightly, then mayhap shall hail me
A Gideon, a Deliverer !—and—the end ?
Is—Triumph of the Saints ! Millennial Glory !—
I doubt not. First : *who* then must die ?—Ye eyes
Gifted with sight prophetic, what behold ye ?—
A scaffold—and a - - - Hate to all God's haters
Is lawful—most approved to thee, Charles Stewart !
What said the Spirit in Philippi's camp,
As pagans make report ?—Thine evil Genius
Am I, O King ! To one, who slew a Tyrant,
Those words were spoken. He, who yet may slay,

Reechoes them this hour. As Jehu struck
By God's command the Tyrant of his days,
So I, by holy impulse driven, seek
Thine end!—*Beyond that vision*, then—what more
Behold I?—Ha, an earthly crown!—Ye tempt me,
Unruly thoughts!—and yet—Heaven's will be done!
What God shall force me on——Who comes?

*Tumult again echoes from within. The DUKE OF
RICHMOND, accompanied by the EARLS OF
SOUTHAMPTON and BRISTOL, issues from the
Hall of Council.*

EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

Be not distraught with anger!—

EARL OF BRISTOL.

Good, your Grace,
Trust my experience!—I am old—you young.
True, never have I seen such days as these,
Or heard such accusations. Yet, so much
I may advise. When our worst foes seem mad
With anger, when our friends are cowed to coldness,
The wisest course is silence. What did I,
When Buckingham by all the Court supported,
In days long past the most egregious lies

Against my honour urged ?—What was my course,
I say ?—Did I not, seeing every gate
Unto my Sovereign's hearing closed against me,
Did I not seek retirement ?

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Other days
Are these, my dear-loved lord. For Buckingham
Was not a rebel like these men, designing
To strip the Crown of every dignity,
To work our England's fall.—Should I withdraw
To leave my King, my country, undefended ?
No, though they drive me forth, I will return,
And yet return again, and they shall find
Nought but immurement in their deepest dungeon
Can silence Richmond !

EARL OF BRISTOL.

But who knows ? Dear Duke,
You still have many friends. To-morrow, all
This clamour may have died away.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Hark ! hark !
Those cries without !—Nay, songs !—

CROMWELL [*who has stood on one side, regarding them with malignant eyes ; but hearing the tumult without the house, has gazed from the casement, and now steps forward*].

Proud Lords !

The cry of all the earth goes up against ye.—
Hear ye the war-songs of the Saints ?—The people
Speed from the furthest bounds of England hither,
To lay their just demands before you Peers.
These are from Hertford. Mark yon floating
banners !

See, thousands throng the way !—And London's
saints

Have all poured forth to swell the cry for vengeance !
Tremble !—The Lord hath said, “ I will repay.”

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Base slave !—

EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

He speaks the truth. They wend them hither—
Let us withdraw !—or in their frenzied ire—
Us might they tear piecemeal.—

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Let *us* then meet them !

EARL OF BRISTOL.

Richmond, I die with thee, if thou wilt die!—
But canst thou thus desert thy King? when most
He needs such aid? Awake thee! Work thou not
More harm to Heaven's true cause this day, than
all
Its fiercest foes! Come with me!

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

You are right!
On then!—I live for thee, dear Master!

EARL OF BRISTOL.

Speed we!

[*They retire on the right. The Clamour is constantly increasing without. Words from the Crowd's "War-song" are heard at intervals.*]

CROMWELL [*triumphantly*].

Children of wrath, ye fly in vain! The Lord
Shall overtake ye! Is your pomp brought down
Even to the grave? When said ye in your heart,
We will ascend above the heights of Heaven,
Dreamt ye of this dishonour?—Hither—hither,
Ye chosen of the Lord! With loud acclaim

Proclaim the triumph his ! With shawms and trumpets

Set forth his praises ! Let the Saints be joyful :
A two-edged sword be in their hands to execute
Vengeance upon the heathen ! Bind their kings
With chains, their nobles all with iron fetters :
Such honour claim his Saints ! Praise ye the Lord !

REBEL SONG [*from without*].

Give forth each Criminal !
Slaughter the traitors all !
Low let our foemen fall !

Hampden, we call on thee ;
Pym, this thine office be—
Guard England's Majesty !

So crushed be Tyrant's power !
So sealed be Freedom's dower !
This is the chosen hour !

The Petitioners make their entrance tumultuously. CROMWELL places him at their head. Many Peers, &c. issue, some in wonder and alarm, some in tumult, from the Hall of Council. Amongst

them the EARLS OF HOLLAND, ESSEX, *and*
NORTHUMBERLAND.

PETITIONERS [*confusedly*].

Hail, great Northumberland ! Hail, worthy Hol-
land !

Brave Essex !

[*Their Cries are taken up and repeated by the
Crowd without.*]

EARL OF HOLLAND.

Welcome, gentle friends. We stand
Prepared to hear your wrongs.

EARL OF ESSEX.

But enter ! enter !
Even at the House's bar with all due form.
We'll list you.

PETITIONERS.

Essex—Holland—live.

[*The Peers, Petitioners, &c. stream into the
Inner Hall.*]

CROMWELL [*in the foreground*].

These sons
Of Belial—these malignant Peers, will scarce
Gain courage now to taunt the Lord's own people.

Hark ! now more godly sounds ! yet rife with zeal
And holy resolution ! From this hour
Date we the fall of Babylon !

PURITAN SONG [*without*].

Smite ye the rulers, lay them low !
The Lord our God shall overthrow.
Dash ye their heads against the stones !
Such vengeance many a crime atones.
The Lord commands,—his Saints obey :
Cast down, uproot, consume, and slay !

REBEL SONG [*blending in wild confusion with the
Puritan strain*].

So crushed be Tyrant's Power,
So sealed be Freedom's Dower !
Wake ! This is Vengeance' Hour !

[*Great Confusion. Cromwell stands with up-
raised eyes and clenched hands, listing the songs
of vengeance. Then, as if inspired with sacred
frenzy, he cries with a loud voice, Jehovah ! and
so passes with rapid strides to the interior of the
Hall. The Tumult still continues, and appears
even to increase in fury. After a while, the
Scene gradually changes.*

SCENE III.

Chamber in Windsor Castle. Evening.

KING CHARLES, *alone, sits in the back ground, at the Casement.*

KING CHARLES.

FAR, far from noisy clamours here ! How peaceful,
How heavenly is the scene ! The golden stars
Come out, still one by one. How little think
The dwellers in those pure and holy orbs
Of our vain cares below ! And yet, I err.
They too may have to fight the fight of Faith,
To combat 'gainst Dishonour, 'gainst Injustice :
And whatsoe'er their fate, or calm, or marred
By frequent storms like ours, it *us* beseems not
To grieve, that we must struggle, ere we gain
The goal of victory ! Had our parents stood—
Our primal parents,—this in sooth had been not :
But choice presumes the power from good to fall.
They fell. One, Holy, Great, Supreme, Eternal,

Died for our sins. We yet may rise again,
But not without perpetual conflict here!
Murmur not, man, but bless Almighty Goodness!
Thy choice was evil. Had no choice been granted,
Thou wert a will-less slave.—But whither stray
My thoughts? Whate'er the *origin* of ill,
(Which I conceive most clear,) this know we surely,
That ill exists, and must be battled with,
Without us and within us.—Surely, surely,
Some deadly sin of mine, which I myself
Conceive not, must have wrought, in part have
wrought,
The woes my England bears. Could such a land
As mine, a land that boasted loyalty
To all its Kings, thus disaffected prove,
Without strange provocation? Grant, the spirit
Of discontent, of disobedience,—worse
Than all, of hatred to God's Church,—be spread
Now far and wide,—and so, despite all efforts,
Must work dire evil! Could I find no means
At earlier hour to lull the rising storm?
Did I not woo the tempest forth by rest,
By indolent repose? Or if not this;

Did not my swift dismissal of the Parliaments
Who would not yield the needful votes to end
The wars themselves commenced,—did not this
rashness

Fan ashes into fiery flames? Yet no!

I erred not there. My people felt and knew
How wronged I was by those tyrannic Commons.
Vain now these thoughts! What has been, has
been. Turn

Thine eyes then on the dreary Present, Charles!
What should'st thou do? Thy foes, and England's
foes—

(*That* are they)—these demand thy prompt assent
Unto the banishment from England's Councils
Of all the Church's servants. Much they promise
If I but yield in this! O idle thought!

I yield no more. Once, once I sinned thus deeply,
When thou didst die, my Strafford!—So, again,
I sin not! No, reflection long hath taught me,
We may not yield to Ill in hope of Good
From Ill arising. All the world may sue
Or threat!—Ye holy Counsellors, pure Guides
Of Christ's blest Church,—I will not e'er desert ye.

Enter Page from the Right.

PAGE.

Your Privy Council, Sire, request an audience.

KING CHARLES.

Admit them. [*Page retires.*] In my fate seems

this most painful ;

That my best friends do cause me greater woe

Than my worst foes for ever prompting me

To my dishonour—urging the surrender

Of all these insolent offenders claim.

And Hyde and Falkland are amongst such friends !

They come.—

Enter LORD FALKLAND, MR. SERJEANT HERBERT, SIR DUDLEY CARLETON, HYDE, ST. JOHN, LORD SAVIL, &c.

I greet you fairly, Gentlemen,

What would you of me ?

SERJEANT HERBERT.

Sire ! we scarcely need

To name our prayer. Once more we seek your

presence,

Beseeching you to grant, without delay,

Your royal signature—

KING CHARLES.

My worthy Herbert,
I ever honoured you. In other days,
You had a stately trusty pillar proved
Of England's realm. Alas, your noble nature,
Too gentle for such hours, has bent beneath
The adverse storms of hate. I blame you not :
I count you faithful still. Yet Heaven be witness,
How little, one short fleeting year ago,
I could have thought, my Herbert would have
 urged me
To such a deed as this ! abandonment
Of my first duties !—Others too I see—
Falkland and Hyde - - - but to the point !—Good
 Sirs,
I swore to guard the Church's rights for ever.
That oath is registered in Heaven.—

LORD FALKLAND.

O Sire,
For worlds, I would not urge you break your oath !
But this can *not* be *now* ! The Church's rights
Are spiritual only. Yield in this ;
Cede but her temporal powers, which to her essence

In nought pertain ! Thus may you better guard
The *Core*, which still remains behind.

ST. JOHN.

And, Sire,

Whatever here be urged, however right
Or wrong this measure in itself, 'tis now
Too late to dream of crushing it. Both Lords
And Commons are as one : the Land combines
To claim this Act of Justice—so they call it.
And let me add, most terrible convulsions
Must follow your refusal now. Vast crowds
Patrol our London's streets—they threaten death
To all whom they esteem malignant. If
You yield not, even the Monarch's life—

KING CHARLES.

Of old

I know you, Sir. No more !—I speak to you,
Lord Falkland. Nice distinctions here you draw ;
But does not conscience tell you that the Church,
The Guardian of the State, should also join
In all her councils ? Think you that Religion
Is as a thing apart from Life ? or one
To raise, to o'erinform it ?—Wherefore more ?—

My Lords and Gentlemen, our souls must tell us,
If party blindness doth not narrow them,
That England's Church from England's Council-
board

Should never be excluded!—Ask you then
Your King to yield to wrong?—I turn to *you*.
Speak, Hyde!—Is this *your* prayer?—

HYDE [*after a pause*].

Alas, it is so!—

—Far brighter days may come, will come, I doubt
not—

Wrong may be then atoned. The Church's foes
Are in the ascendant now; and, Sire! the nation
Seconds their voice in this.—

KING CHARLES.

It is not so!—

No, no, despite the thousand, artful frauds
By which the Land's true pastors have been driven
From their flocks' keeping—still the people, Hyde,
Revere the Church!—How should they fail to love
her?—

Hath she not loved *them* truly? Gave she not—
No more of this!—You know, as well as I,

The loyally, the faithfully affectioned
Throughout this land are silenced by a faction ;
Brawlers alone allowed to speak ! And *why* ?
Why thrones that faction o'er the land triumphant ?
Why doth it now, in either House, presume
To tyrannize ?—I wait your answer, Hyde—
Yours, Falkland ?—Ye do speak not.—Know ye
not,

Half of the Commons' House, full half at least,
Are ours in heart, the Church's friends ; and more,
Far more than half, amongst the Peers ! And yet,
This faction rules triumphant !—Wherefore, say I,
Is this ?—Because—the shameful moral weakness,
The worse than cowardice of England's guards,
True guards—hath yielded, scarce with show of
conflict,

To every insolent demand !—Perchance
I wrong you, Hyde. For you alone methinks
Have striven !—Yet at last you yield : *you* too !—
Yes, here I see you at this hour, entreating
Your King to seal his shame ! Concession urging
To his and England's foes !—And I am all
Deserted.—Yes, my every counsellor

Would press me to a deed of faithless treason ;
Treason to England, treason to myself,
Treason to Christ's blest Church !—O worst of
sorrows,

When courage but inspires the assailer's heart,
The bold bad man's ; and all the would-be faithful
Fear even to assert their loyalty,
Or claim their thoughts their own !—When this
sad cowardice

Invades the breasts of any realm's defenders,
(No matter, whence it springs—from moral
weakness,

Or dulness, or sad indolence), then, then,
Be sure, that realm is lost !—Heaven will not
save us,

If we its proffered mercies grasp not.—Friends,
I leave ye to your thoughts. Retire !—

ST. JOHN [*aside to Savil*].

The Queen

Now seeks him. She will gain her point !—

SAVIL.

You think ?

ST. JOHN.

Ay, mawkish tenderness weighs more with him—

But *see ! then* trust me !—

[*Bowing, the Members of the Privy Council retire, Hyde, the last.*]

HYDE [*returning hastily*].

Sire ! you do not scorn me ? [*He kneels.*]

KING CHARLES.

No, no, dear Hyde !—I know thee true of heart !

Perchance, held *I* thy place—but go now, go !

The King of England never may betray

His servants, Hyde ! -- Ha ! fell not Strafford ? --

Leave me !

—That crime be now atoned !—

HYDE [*kissing his hand*].

My noble Monarch ! [*He withdraws.*]

KING CHARLES [*alone*].

It was a painful task to speak so plainly—

To tell a Hyde and Falkland, that their weakness

Alone ensured an England's fall. And yet

The truth is truth !—I should not hide it.—Ha !

My Henrietta !

Enter the QUEEN from the left. She appears much agitated, and bears in her hand various papers, &c.

QUEEN.

Charles!—have you yet saved me?

KING CHARLES.

What mean you?—

QUEEN.

What?—You ask me?—O Charles, Charles,
And can you—can you doubt?—This signature
Is granted?

KING CHARLES.

Never shall be granted.

QUEEN.

Ah!—

You would ensure my death then?—As you know,
And long have known, these foes of yours, this
faction,

Project my accusation of high treason—
My death!—

KING CHARLES.

I fear, their wild fierce frenzy
Might prompt them to such deed—or any deed!—

I know them rather fiends than men—and therefore
Consent to part from thee! tho' with thy presence
My joy in life departs.—Yet, since exists
This danger (though I scarce believe the leaders
Have thought with serious will of this); yet still,
Since aye from hour to hour their hell-born thoughts
More impious grow, till scarce they seem themselves
To find sufficient ill to glut their fancies,
And so, for want of lesser game, the men
Who treason saw in Digby's equipage
Might chance attaint even *thee*; I have decreed,
That thou should'st leave me—should'st to Holland
go—

And now the hour is nigh—

QUEEN.

Oh never, never
The hour will come when I reach Holland's shore
If now you yield not!—I have sure advices
That they forthwith the Attainder will present,
Within the week, if you “hold firm,” since thus
You choose to call mere frenzy!—

KING CHARLES.

Dearest Wife!

This cannot be! You err.

QUEEN.

Read but these vouchers !

And for the rest— [*Going to the door on the left,*

Draw nigh, Sir !

WILLIAM MURRAY *enters*.KING CHARLES [*reading*].

God in heaven !

Canst thou behold such villany, and yet

Withhold thy thunderbolts ? [*Seeing Murray*].

Whom have we here ?

QUEEN.

One I have ever trusted—Murray, Charles.

In Hampden's counsels, too. He brings me tidings.

KING CHARLES.

O curse of evil age ! to use such means

As these,—But speak, Sir. What beheld,

What heard you ?

MURRAY.

Sire, a wilder ire than even

In Strafford's time they knew, pervades the breasts

Of all the people ! 'Gainst yon royal Lady,

The Queen, my mistress, this is most directed.

Her men conceive your counsellor. Yet worse,
More fearful tidings bear I. Hampden, Sire,
And Pym, project her prompt attainder
For treason 'gainst the realm, and nothing now
But your assent—

KING CHARLES.

How know'st thou this?

MURRAY.

I learnt it
From Hampden's lips! He said the fell conclusion
Was forced on him—

KING CHARLES.

False-hearted traitor! him
Of all these foes, I do——but go, go Murray!
Thou hast said all?

MURRAY.

Of highest import, Sire!

KING CHARLES.

Enough. Withdraw.

[*Murray retires on the Left.*]

QUEEN.

And now?

KING CHARLES [*after a long pause*].

My will is changed not !

QUEEN.

How—

KING CHARLES.

Hear me, Henrietta ! I believe

All this concerted—for effect—to fright me,

By this smooth villain, Hampden. For my part,

You know I place no truth in your allies,

Your emissaries. They, I do believe,

Have wrought us oft more ill, than all our foes'

Worst daring. Pass we this. Be Murray true :

He too may be deceived ! I tell you, dearest ;

Now that calm thought my first wild thoughts can
follow,

I see this may not be ! Attaint the Queen

Of England ! No : the hour is not yet ripe

For villanies so foul. If anything

Could wake our recreant friends to manly action,

It would be this. *That* well our foes do know.

Besides, the *nation* would receive with horror

Tidings of such vile treason ! Hampden, dearest,

Is far too crafty, far too worldly-wise,

To risk such frenzied hazard. Calm you then !
Fear nought ! You shall depart in safety !

QUEEN [*after a long pause*].

Charles,

You do not really think my fears for me
Alone could move me thus ! For you, for you
I tremble ! Pardon this deception, Charles !—
I thought I best might move you thus.

KING CHARLES.

Dear Wife,

I deemed so, from the first ! I read your soul.

QUEEN [*half playfully*].

And can I ne'er deceive you, then ? But now,
Now plainly, truthfully,—(I know you like not
These wiles of mine. Yet for your good, my
Charles—)

Well, to the question, to this mighty question :
Charles, I do feel your crown is now at stake,
Your *life* ! and think—not only all *my* future,
Your children's and your country's rest on this !
Your children, Charles ! or rather say, your son—
Our gallant eldest ! Can you nought for him
Abandon ? Make your stand on *this*, the nation

Will side against you ! Almost all men think
These Bishops should not sway the state.

KING CHARLES.

Dear Wife—

You may speak thus ! but I ?— [*Restraining his
emotion.*] You are not bound

By all the tender ties of pious joy,
By all the charities of meek religion,
By faith, by zeal, by love, to England's Church !—
Yours is another creed,—estranged communion !
You do not feel as sacred, as ordained
By Heaven, the rights which I through life have
learnt

To cherish, and have sworn to guard !—Perchance,
Your priests, as I believe, have urged you, dearest,
From hate to England's Church, and wish to work
Her downfall, to adjure me thus. You droop
Your eyes and brow ? O gentlest Henrietta !
That this sad barrier still should stand between us !
Thy soul be not all mine ! Still, if thou lov'st
Thy Church with fervour, then may'st thou con-
ceive,

What ties, what chains of dutiful affection

My blessed Church hath loving wound around me.
I cannot aye abandon her. No more !
For thee, fear nought ! Thou shalt depart in
safety :
I will myself —

QUEEN [*deeply affected*].

Think not of me ! Dear husband !
Forgive me, O forgive me ! That I thus
Should cross thee ever ! that my luckless fate
Should doom me still to work thy woe ! And yet
Thou lov'st me ! Oh, how ill, how ill deserve I
That deep, that pure affection ! Save indeed
That I too love thee, Charles ! and love may claim
Love's answering fervour.

KING CHARLES [*embraces her*].

Leave me now, sweet wife !
My mind is harassed by conflicting feelings.
I fain would be alone. Take this thought with
thee ;—
Despite the barriers Heaven hath reared, thou
wert—
Thou art—my blessing ever ! Fare thee well,
Awhile : I seek thee soon.

[*Queen retires on the Left.*]

KING CHARLES [*alone*].

Poor Henrietta !

If this should be ? If these vile foes of hers
Should dare ?—I will not think it : yet I know not
To what strange madness their malignant spirits—
Hampden, 'tis true, would never risk such cast ;
But Vane, young Vane ! Well, well, this must we
hazard—

For duty's sake even this ! And worse, still worse ;
(For such attainder ne'er *could* gain its end,)
From my refusal, *civil war*—Yes, yes,
'Tis so indeed ! Such wild satanic frenzy,
Misnamed religion, fills the Church's foes,
That if I still maintain her bishops' rights,
Fierce strife *must* be the consequence ! And
blood—

My subjects' blood—shall flow ! Well let it. Thus
It must be—at *some* hour ! And yet—yet——
Heaven

Enlighten me ! Should I not use all means
Such evil to avert ? It may be—may be—
That if my foes demand aught *worse* than this,
Aught more abhorrent to the people's hearts—

The Church's whole destruction,—or the seizure—
In fine, aught Treason yet not pressed upon us,—
The *nation* then at last may wake to reason,
May by its voice control them ! Then, my friends
May gain the force to speak, which now they have
not,—

And in the end——Most fearful thought ! The
blood

Of thousands poured like water, when my will
Might yet avert this horror—might perchance,
By momentary yielding, work such change——
Is this doubt weakness ? Be it so. Yet no.
It springs from love ! My people, shall I plunge ye
In this worst ill below,—this civil conflict,
Unparalleled, most deadly—whilst there rests
Aught hope of yet my friends to life awaking ?
For waked they only, then our foes would pause,
Would dare demand no more. And shall I sign,
then ?

Again betray my duty ? Reason, Charles,
And love must guide thee ! Nay, and duty bids
thee

Preserve thy people's lives. Intestine war !

O deadly curse ! All the sweet sanctities
Of life invading—brother against brother,
Father 'gainst son arraying—if I now
Refuse to sign, I seal thy certainty :
But if I sign, I may avert thee.—Fears,
For my sweet wife, my children, do ye press me,
Without my knowledge, to this deed ? Perchance—
And even *if* so, ye scarce are base ; and Heaven
May pardon ye. My Church too ! May I not
Avert thy downfall ? All now rage against thee ;
Thy friends to the tempestuous current yielding
Demand this act of me. If this be granted,
If temporal power be ta'en from thee, to render
In happier hours again - - - And Laud, dear Laud—
His life too may be sacrificed ! Nay, all
These holy men, immured within the Tower,—
I can foresee, can know, (as it had chanced
Already,) if I now rest firm, within
The week, all these will be attainted too,
And in the end——I must !

[*He goes to the Table, on which lies the Bill
for signature.*

[*Pausing*]

I shall seem weak,—

The world will say “He aye deserts his friends,
This feeble fickle Charles!” In after ages
My shame perchance - - - Yet more, my Council
even,

Still nigh, who heard my firm resolve, who now
Must think the Queen’s entreaties moved
What their calm reason could not,—they will
scorn me,

Even while they loudest praise the deed. So be
it!—

Such scorn must be endured! [*He signs.*] ’Tis
done. O England,

Much do I sacrifice to thee. Alas!

Perchance most vainly. And for all my love
Thou giv’st me scorn. I feel, my heart forebodes,
All will prove vain. The dread intestine strife
Must come, must come! my subjects’ blood must
flow.—

Still, I have acted for the best: my heart,
My heart approves me. Let the world condemn—
Let all!— [*He goes to the Entrance, R.*] Who
waits without?

PAGE [*appearing, R.*].

Your pleasure, Sire?

KING CHARLES.

Call all the Privy Council hither—those
At least who have not left the Palace.

PAGE.

Sire,

They wait without, not far. They hoped that still—

KING CHARLES.

Is't so?—Well, summon them ! [*Page withdraws.*]

They knew the Queen

Would seek me, that my love would grant to her,

Or rather say, my weakness, what my soul

Condemned ! They come.

Pause. Then enter HYDE, FALKLAND, SAVIL,
ST. JOHN, HERBERT, &c.

KING CHARLES [*holding forth the Bill*].

Behold our signature !

Your will, Sirs, hath been done. Take it, and
leave us !

SERJEANT HERBERT.

O Sire—

FALKLAND.

Most blest concession !

ST. JOHN.

Blest in sooth !

Safety and love have counselled !

HYDE [*angrily*].

St. John, peace !—

My monarch——

Enter the QUEEN from the Left.

QUEEN.

Charles, you tarry : and our Gloucester——

Ah—what—what see I ? You, Sirs, here ?

HYDE [*hastily*].

The King

Hath pleased to grant our humble prayer.

ST. JOHN [*triumphantly*].

The Bill

Is signed !

QUEEN.

O Charles, I must rejoice ! You save

Yourself and us ! Yet, whence this change ?

ST. JOHN.

Your Majesty

Perchance may best conceive.

SIR DUDLEY CARLETON.

Our thanks, dear Madam,
Are due—

ST. JOHN.

Are surely due !

KING [*standing apart*].

The deed is done !

And may not—*should* not be recalled ! [*Turning*

to the Privy Council.] I yield

For England's sake—to save her, if I may,

From civil strife ! Perchance I err, but Heaven

Knows I would work its will. Yet ye, who praise,

Think me at heart—and what will England

think ?

The world ?—Posterity ? My foes must triumph.

Go, Sirs, and spread my shame. My soul, yet arm

thee !

Go ! I would commune with my God alone.

[*Whilst the KING stands on the Left, his eyes bent on earth, as if lost in reverie, the QUEEN leans forward vainly to meet his glance, and the Counsellors depart, Hyde, his eyes wet with tears, amongst the last.*

The Curtain falls.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—1645.—June.

Royal Camp on the Heights near Harborough. The Scene represents the Interior of the King's Tent. The Curtains are drawn aside in the background, so as to afford a general view of the Royal Encampments, and the distant hills and moors. It is Seven in the Morning.

HORSEMAN'S DRINKING SONG [*heard from the distance*].

CARE, Care, go hang, go hang !
Fate life's cords may sever ;

Still we'll sing, as first we sang,
When joy's clarions loudest rang,
The King for ever !

Death, death, come buss, come buss !

'Twere a vain endeavour,
Should'st thou hope to trouble us ;
Come, we greet thee, shouting thus,
The King for ever !

Life, life, beyond the grave,
We will fear thee never !
We are bold as we are brave,
Loyalty our souls should save—
The King for ever !

KING CHARLES, *who has issued from the interior compartment of his Tent on the right, approaches the background, and listens to the concluding verse of this song. He reclines his head mournfully, and appears to pray.*

YOUNG CAVALIER'S SONG [*heard from the distance*].

I.

MY lady she rose in the dawning so clear,
And bent from her casement to Love's Cavalier :
Go, fight for thy King and thy country, she said,
The banner of Glory above thee be spread,
And Angels hold guard o'er my Cavalier's head !
Yes, he sighed, King and country lay claim to my sword,
But Love is my Ruler, and Love my Reward.

II.

They met too below. Could she frown on his prayer
When he sped o'er the hills rebel roundheads to dare ?
No, many a sigh did she breathe for his fate,

And called on Heaven's kindness to shield him from hate:
Then blamed her sweet tenderness—dear one, too late!
For the kisses, which trembled with passionate fear,
Were sweeter than prayers to the young Cavalier!

KING CHARLES [*letting fall the Curtains in the
background—after a pause*].

Light songs and drunken revels! Little thought
On the great hazard of this day—on God—
Or on God's judgments. May I hope for con-
quest

Whilst my best friends so all unworthy prove them
Of Heaven's high guard?—Alas, my *noblest*
friends

Have past from earth—as Heaven had ta'en them
hence

To spare them future horrors, ills too great
For even them to remedy. Carnarvon,
Brave Lindsay, Aubigny,—even more than these,
My Cornish Worthies, Slanning and Trevanion,—
With their most loyal leader, faithful Gentleman,
Whose dear loss caused me tears I proudly shed,
My own Sir Bevil Glanvil! Add to these
Young noble Grandison; Godolphin, too,

Who proved he loved his King ; and then, thou
Falkland !

Who by thy stainless loyalty redeemed
Thine early weakness.—All have past away !
And left me—in the west, a lawless Goring,
Licentious, impious, worse than twenty foes,
Though brave ; another Glanvil, how unlike
To his undying namesake ! Best of all,
Thee, valorous, truthful Hopton, for whose life
I should thank Providence ! Yes, thou liv'st still.
And here too, I have friends. Yet how,
How close my eyes to the unwelcome truth,
That license stains the best of these ? Not Astley,
Not Lichfield,—these are faithful to their God
As me ! But for my nephew Rupert, and
His friends,—alas, that I should have such cause
To blame them ! Can I e'er forget, good Heaven,
The recent storm of Leicester—my, my Leicester ?
(For am I not its King ?) Wherein my subjects
By Rupert's horsemen first, and then by others,
Seduced through their example, were—or slaugh-
tered,
Or pillaged, at the least. With friends like these,

Should I even hope for victory? Who's to check
The insulting rapine of such loyalists
Triumphant? Rupert even could not stay them,
Once bent on vengeance. Then too, if I turn
To our foes' ranks, I find Rebellion there,
'Tis true; but yet a seeming Piety. Religion,
Even misdirected, proves some check.—O King
Of kings, and Lord of lords, if thou foresee'st
In thine eternal wisdom, that my triumph
Will not secure thy Church from fall, nor save
This state from rapine;—and men's minds are yet
So all-distorted from their bent, I fear
In any case such ills;—then reach, O Lord,
Thine end, even by my fall—my Death!—if that
Seem good to thee. Perchance Remorse will work
Even in my foemen's hearts, what bare Defeat
Could never.—Steps are nigh!

Enter PRINCE RUPERT *and* SIR MARMADUKE
LANGDALE.

PRINCE RUPERT.

'Tis insolence

To cross me thus, Sir!

SIR MARMADUKE LANGDALE.

May the King decide !

PRINCE RUPERT.

Decide ! It is decided !

KING CHARLES.

How, my nephew ?

PRINCE RUPERT.

I would advance, Sir, to survey the foes'
Positions. Langdale here—

SIR MARMADUKE LANGDALE.

So please your Majesty,
'Twere madness——

PRINCE RUPERT [*to Sir Marmaduke*].

Will you let me speak, or no ?
How dar'st thou——

KING CHARLES.

Nephew, peace ! I will not hear
Such words as these, before *me* : shame upon you,
On such a morn, when England's fate's at stake,
To brawl thus loud, to chide Sir Marmaduke,
Our faithful counsel ever !

PRINCE RUPERT.

Yes. And I
Must ever be to blame? By all the saints
I will not brook this !

KING CHARLES [*severely*].

Are you mad?—Withdraw,
Until you learn more manners !

PRINCE RUPERT.

Uncle !

KING CHARLES.

Well, Sir.

I long have known you rash, but never yet
Heard words so thoughtless in our royal presence !
If you can speak not with due reverence,
As you *should* do, we bid you instantly
Withdraw.

PRINCE RUPERT.

I did not mean - - - 'tis hard, Sire, hard,
That I must ever be condemned ; unheard, too !

KING CHARLES.

That is no just complaint. You know me prompt

At any hour to hear you ; know, too, Rupert,
That I am blamed by many, my best friends,
For favouring you too highly ! I have deemed
Pre-eminence your due ; but your rash spirit
In constant broils entangles me. You act
As you would work my ruin.

PRINCE RUPERT.

O my King !

KING CHARLES.

I know you true at heart, yet not the less
Must blame this rashness.—To the point ! What
ask you ?—

Good Langdale, hear him speak !

PRINCE RUPERT.

Sire, in plain words,
We know not where the foe now lies, nor guess
How strong his forces. I would forward ride
With my brave horsemen, and behold. Sir Mar-
maduke
Cries out against one forward step.

KING CHARLES.

Speak, Langdale !

What moves thee to this counsel ?

SIR MARMADUKE.

As I know,

Your Majesty must think as I do. Here

We hold the vantage-ground. You know the

Prince :

If he advances, we shall have to follow, .

And then must fight at loss.

KING CHARLES.

And yet I side

With Rupert ! Chide not, dear Sir Marmaduke !

Uncertainty hath ever much of ill.

I count it best to know our foes at once.—

But who comes here ? Ah, Astley and brave

Lichfield !

Our Council fills.

Enter LORD ASTLEY and the EARL OF LICHFIELD.

LORD ASTLEY.

Good morrow to your Majesty.

EARL OF LICHFIELD.

We wish you happiest fortune.

KING CHARLES [*to the latter*].

That attend

You too, my brave young friend, to-day ! [*To Astley*] Dear Astley,

You're welcome hither. Give us now your counsel,

You both—on a moot question here. Yet stay !
Digby and Hyde approach. First let them join us.

Enter LORD DIGBY and SIR EDWARD HYDE.

DIGBY.

We greet your Majesty.

HYDE.

Dear Sire, good morrow.
Be this day prosperous to our arms !

KING CHARLES.

If Heaven

So wills ! We greet and thank you, Gentlemen.
Now to this question. Should my nephew Rupert,

As I advise, proceed, with his good horse,
To view the foemen's powers, or should we rest
Inactive here? Speak all, as wisdom prompts you!

LORD DIGBY.

I counsel swift advance, for honour's sake!
We gain a great advantage in attack,
Yielding the semblance of assured success
To us—of fear to our opponents. Sire,
The fortune of the day rests more in this
Than all that force or skill may afterwards
With noblest zeal perform.

KING CHARLES.

So too deemed I.

You, Astley?

LORD ASTLEY.

Know no better counsel, Sire.

KING CHARLES.

And Lichfield?

LICHFIELD.

For the onset, good, my Liege:
No long delay!

KING CHARLES.

My Hyde?

HYDE [*after a pause*].

Though a Civilian,
So, little skilled to render counsel here,
I must oppose these valiant Lords, and urge you
To hold the heights. There is no need, no cause
For such strange haste.

PRINCE RUPERT.

Friend Hyde, you err there shrewdly !
The army's hot for fight. Now in the hour
Of lusty manhood let us lead them on,
And victory must be ours ; but if we linger,
Right soon their hearts will droop. Your books,
good Hyde,
May teach you much—

KING CHARLES.

No more, good Nephew mine !
Since I do share your counsels, and moreover,
Four out of six on our good Council-board
Approve the deed, it shall be even thus.
You may ride forward.

PRINCE RUPERT.

Thanks, thanks, Sire !

KING CHARLES.

Stay, Rupert !

You will not rush upon the strife, without
Occasion. Mark me ! Since I trust your prudence,

You'll prove you worthy of your charge ?

PRINCE RUPERT.

And why

Should I be doubted ?

KING CHARLES.

Rupert !

PRINCE RUPERT.

Pardon, Sire !

KING CHARLES.

Thou need'st not pardon, Rupert. But thy zeal
Transports thee ever.—Well, no more ! I know
Thou mean'st the best. Wert thou but gentle,
Rupert,
As thou art true, right few or none should match
thee.

Thou hast our love. Farewell !

PRINCE RUPERT [*affected*].

I go then, Sire,
To serve you by my deeds at least !
[*He departs hastily.*]

KING CHARLES.

Thou, Astley,
Wilt rest with us to day. But who comes here
So swiftly ? Doth the Prince return ? Not so.

*Enter COLONEL PAGE, with Guards leading SIMON
JEPHSON, Prisoner.*

What means this ?

COLONEL PAGE.

Sire, a rebel puritan
Erst captured, lead we to your presence. He
Blasphemes your Majesty : the soldiers ask
His death, nor could I shield him from their fury
Save by conveying him where you might render
His final judgment.

KING CHARLES.

Who then—

PAGE.

Simon Jephson,

A wealthy leader of the accursed Faction
In these parts, Sire.

KING CHARLES.

Speak, Jephson ! Wherefore dost thou
BlaspHEME our royal name ?

JEPHSON.

The prophets cursed
Of old their tyrants. Curse thou Meroz bitterly !
The Scriptures spake. And for the King prepared
Is Tophet.

DIGBY.

Canting slave ! Beseech your Majesty,
Let him be hung o' the instant, and his carcase
Fatten the fowls of prey !

KING CHARLES.

No ! See we first
If he *himself* believe. No deep conviction,
However wrongly founded, should be all
Despised. Say, Jephson,—since men call thee
thus,—
Know'st thou aught ill, aught crime in us, to
prompt
Such words, such bitterness ?

JEPHSON.

Hast thou not striven
To make this England but thy slave, thy tool,
To trample on at will? Hast thou not dared
Attaint five chiefest saints of deadly treason?
Hast thou not waged against the Lord most high
Fell warfare? And in Leicester, even now,
But few days hence, hast thou not slaughtered
there,
And murdered?—like to lions, greedily,
That make the poor their prey. For mine own
loss—
Then died my wife and child—my dearest ones—
But let that pass!—of this I will not plain me;
But think on all the thousand orphans' cries
Which soared that day to Heaven! O guilty King,
Those prayers shall grow to chains to drag thee
downward,
Down, down the deep abyss to Hell, when knells
Thine hour appointed!

KING CHARLES.

See ye, Sirs;
The man hath had dread wrong. Joy then with me

That I not rashly slew him. Wife and child !—
O Heaven ! Those who are fathers, friends,
amongst you,
And husbands, as myself, will scarcely need
Excuses for aught frenzy in this rebel.
—Unhappy man, could I recall the Past,
And by my wish or prayer revive the Dead,
Thou should'st not curse in vain. But this may
be not !

We pity and forgive thee : ay, in truth,
Have little to forgive. Yet, for thy charges,
Hear this. We never sought to bind our England
In any chains of servitude. We loved her,
And ever wished her happy. War was forced
Upon us, by the traitors whom thine error
Pronounces saints of God. Our followers' license
Hath cost us bitter grief—more deep, more bitter,
Than all the woes of our adversity—
Believe a monarch's word !

JEPHSON.

I do defy thee !
Thou can'st not shake my faith ! Seducing spirits,
Mislead not God's anointed. I would quit
Thy hateful presence.

KING CHARLES.

Be thy wish fulfilled !

Friends, lead him hence, and give him careful tendance.

It is our pleasure, none molest his person—

So tell our host !

[*Colonel Page and Guards retire with Jephson.*

DIGBY.

This bounteous lenience, Sire,
Works ill, not good. The enemy destroy
Their noblest captives. Men have all to lose
Who fight for us, and nothing risk when side they
With traitors and with rebels. Is this just ?
Or politic ?

KING CHARLES.

Perchance it is not, Digby.

Yet seek we not for friends from servile fear.
If good means cannot serve us, ill means shall not !
And we would rather lose with honor, than
By stern injustice win. But who come here ?

Enter SIR JOHN CANSFIELD, *with his Son*, WALTER CANSFIELD.

Ha, Cansfield, thou returned !

SIR JOHN [*kneeling*].

Hail, gracious Sire !

KING CHARLES.

Whom bring'st thou with thee, good Sir John ?

Ye speed

Perchance to share a bloody field.

SIR JOHN [*rising, having kissed the KING'S hand,
to his Son*].

Dost hear ?

Sire, 'tis my youngest and my last !

KING CHARLES.

Your last,

Sir John ?

SIR JOHN.

The two, besides this youth, still left me,
Died, Sire, last week. We beat the rebels off.—
They fell with fame. I may say that !

KING CHARLES [*affected*].

O Cansfield !

Dear trusty servant : that thy master's cause
Should strip thee thus of all thy branches ! Now
This last, too.

SIR JOHN.

Falls he in your service, Sire,
His life is—'Tis his mother's grief - - - These tears !
They shame me !

KING CHARLES.

No, they honour thee, good Cansfield ;
I will not speak of aught return to thee :
What can requite such loss ? But should we conquer,
This son at least——Enough ! Deeds speak, not
words.

SIR JOHN [*after a pause*].

Your Majesty's acceptance of his service
Is all I ask. One gracious word from you.

KING CHARLES [*turning to Walter Cansfield*].

Young man, if you your sire resemble, little
You need of counsel. I will say but this—
If you do fall in England's cause and mine,
That fall may work to *others* grief ; for *you*
It shall reap glory. It is not success
Which gives our actions true renown—but Faith
And Fortitude. Be these then thine !—Our eyes

Are on thee. For thy loyal father's sake,
Our heart already loves.

ASTLEY.

A messenger !

An OFFICER of PRINCE RUPERT'S enters hastily.

KING CHARLES.

What news ?

OFFICER.

My liege, the Prince implores your haste.

KING CHARLES.

To follow him ?

OFFICER.

So please you, yes. We cannot
Retire without incurring imminent danger
Of misconception—triumph in the foes,
Dismay in us and ours.

KING CHARLES.

Set onwards then !

Or right, or wrong, 'tis now too late to pause ;
We must support the Prince. Sir Marmaduke,
Thou lead'st our left. Thou, gallant Lichfield, haste
To head our own brave horse. So forward, gentlemen.

We fight for England's liberties and justice :

May Heaven betide us, as our cause is good.

[Alarum without. The Lords and Officers depart hastily, the King at their head, through the issue in the background. The Scene changes.]

SCENE II.

Interior of Cromwell's Tent in the Rebel Camp.

CROMWELL *alone. He is seated at a table in the foreground, and apparently lost in thought. After a pause he speaks.*

THE hour is nigh of vengeful retribution !

This day a crown is won or lost by thee,

Charles Stewart. More hast thou to lose, perchance,

Than I to gain : for I——Hence selfish visions !

I am God's champion. England's cause is mine :

“ Save England, and then perish Cromwell ! ”—

Speaks

The Spirit thus ?—Not so : for that low voice,

Within me breathing ever, what is this,

If not the Spirit's voice?—The Fiend's?—Hence,
hence,

Suggestion hellborn!—No, should Heaven thus will,
Thus destine me for sway, am *I* not far
More fit to rule an empire than this weak
Poor Charles? My conscience answers, “Yea, I
am so!”

But *one thing* doubt I not: whate'er *my* fortune,
Be my sway ruled above, or no, this King
Must die the death!—Yes, yes, dissemble not
Thy purpose with thyself; elected Cromwell,
Elected for this work!—though it may fit thee
To veil, in God's good cause, thy just designs
From common eyes——Who now, I may say boldly,
Who now can hope to check my will? avert
My settled purport? Hollis? powerless is he
Against one word of mine; and Vane and St. John,
They think them mighty, but their Lord am I,
As they shall find ere long:—for Fairfax here,
And Ireton, they are parts of me, nor dare
To think without me. Two, who might have dared
Oppose me, are no more—John Pym and Hampden.
For Pym, he was not girded to the work

Of vengeance, false remorse oppress'd his spirit ;
He died the death of those who leave the plough
Ere half the field be furrow'd.—But thou, Hampden,
Thou had'st perchance subdued me ; for thy guile
Was matchless.—Well, thou art gone, and now I fear
No rival—save this King, this Stew'art !—Charles

Stew'art,

Thou art a mighty foe, I own it,
Even in thy weakness. I am feared by men,
But thou art loved ! Thou steal'st their hearts away
By thy faint smiles, and in adversity
Might'st yet subdue a nation. Thou must die,
Charles Stewart !

Enter IRETON, FAIRFAX, and SKIPPON.

FAIRFAX.

General, good morrow.

CROMWELL [*starting and rising*].

In

The name of God be welcome, friends !—What
bring you ?

IRETON.

Tidings that Rupert for attack prepares.

SKIPPON.

These lost Philistines leave their heights.

CROMWELL.

How say ye?

On to the conflict then! The Lord of Hosts
Shall lead us. Skippon, go thou forth—already
Our troops await the signal.

SKIPPON.

It is so.

CROMWELL.

See thou, with Doiley, that their hearts be bold,
Their carnal man accoutred for the onset.
Forthwith I draw yon veil aside [*pointing to the
curtain in the background*] and speak
To all the host. [*Exit Skippon.*]

FAIRFAX [*to Cromwell*].

Whispers the Spirit to thee
The issue of this day?

CROMWELL [*solemnly*].

Upon the mountains
I saw their legions scattered, and the ensign
Of the One Lord Jehovah waved on high
Victorious! Ay, my heart assures me, Fairfax,

The war finds end this day : and then, then, Fairfax,
The kingdom of the saints is stablished :

Then, Ireton, shall the great Redeemer reign
Of Israel—then the bright Millennium dawn.
No more !—We combat for the Lord of Hosts
This day : his grace is on us. Ireton, cast
Aside yon curtains !

[*Ireton obeys. The rebel host is descried drawn
up in order on the plain.*

Fare ye well, blest brethren,
In the good work ! Each to your post, I pray you ;
Whilst I to these my chosen followers here
Some words of godly comfort breathe.—Ere long
Shall we rejoice together.

[*Fairfax and Ireton retire.*

CROMWELL [*standing at the entrance to his tent,
his face turned towards the army*].

Praise the Lord
For Israel's avenging ! Hear, ye Kings ! ye Princes,
Tremble !—Thou goest forth before thy people,
O gracious God ! Iniquity prevailed,
Until thy servants rose to wage thy battles.
They chose new gods—the tyrants of the land !

Was there a heart to feel, an arm to smite,
Amidst our Israel's thousands? Ye awaked,
Ye chosen of the Lord, awaked from bondage.
The Princes fought against ye, now they fight!
With ye the angels war from heaven; the stars
Fight against Charles, your Sisera! The rivers
Shall sweep them far away. The Lord hath said,
Curse ye this Meroz! curse ye all the foes
To God, and to his saints!—Set onward then;
This day the mighty work shall be completed.
Blow ye the trumpets. Cry ye as of old,
The sword of the Most High, and Gideon!
The hour of his redeemed is come!

THE ARMY [*tumultuously*].

The sword
Of God and of his servant, righteous Cromwell!
Set onward for the fight!

CROMWELL.

The Lord of Hosts
Is with us!—Smite, subdue, consume, destroy!

[*With loud ejaculations and psalms of triumph
the army sets forward; Cromwell mounts
his horse without the tent, and hastens to
their head.*]

SCENE III.

Part of the Field of Naseby.

HORSEMAN'S SONG.

STRIFE, strife, all hail, all hail !

Ours be brave endeavour :

Fortune like a fickle gale

Bids not aye the brave prevail—

The King for ever !

Spears, spears, be couched in rest !

Foes ! we ne'er will sever,

Till the shock of breast to breast

Proves the strongest worthiest—

The King for ever !

The Horsemen appear in the background riding.

PRINCE RUPERT, *with two Adjutants, wheel before them, and give the word to halt.*

THE PRINCE [*after a pause*].

Boys, have ye hearts to serve King Charles ? Then
follow

Your Rupert on to victory. Your lasses

Give ye no busses, if your spears be dyed not
In roundhead gore this day ! Ye know these knaves
Good foes, as Marston Moor hath taught ye. Joy,
 then,
In such strong wrestlers for the prize !—Set on !
England shall curse the man, your King shall scorn
 him,
Who flies a foe this day.

HORSEMEN [*loudly*].

King Charles and Rupert !

[*The Horsemen set themselves in motion, the
Prince at their head. Their Song is heard
from the distance.*]

Heaven, Heaven, receive our souls !

Truer hearts beat never :

Die we while war's thunder rolls,

Shout we still, till crack the poles,

The King for ever !

SCENE IV.

Another part of the Field.

*Enter LORD ASTLEY, COLONEL PAGE, and other
OFFICERS, with GUARDS, &c.*

PAGE.

PRINCE Rupert hath already charged.

ASTLEY.

And we then?

Where is the King?

OFFICER.

He comes. I saw him yonder
Ride down the glade, and speak some words of cheer
To the three regiments, that hold——

SECOND OFFICER.

See, see——

Far on the left!—Cromwell's assailant there!—
He bears upon Sir Marmaduke.

PAGE.

The King!

Then enter KING CHARLES, accompanied by the EARLS of CARNEWARTH and LICHFIELD, SIR JOHN and WALTER CANSFIELD, and other OFFICERS, &c.

KING CHARLES.

My lords and gentlemen, I pause not now
For many words ; the rebel foe 's before ye.
If ye do love your country and your King,
Your Church, your God, fight boldly in the fray !
I do believe the fate of England rests
On this day's issue.—Further speech we need not.
Conquer, or die !—A nobler martyrdom
The holy Laud knew not upon his scaffold.
Your monarch shares your fate.

CONFUSED CRIES.

God and King Charles !

KING CHARLES.

Astley, it pains me to restrain thine ardour ;
Yet rest thou here awhile, secure this pass !
Such thy first task to-day.—Set onward !

CRIES.

Onward !

[All, save Astley, Officers, and Guards, depart on the right.]

ASTLEY.

Serry your ranks!—Stand firm!—Gaze forth,
friend Wilton!

How goes the fight?

OFFICER [*from a raised part in the back ground*].

Most rarely! Ireton's troops
Are yielding, good my lord.—The Prince pursues
them.

ASTLEY.

And Langdale?

OFFICER.

There—all's doubtful yet. The spears
And helms of the Malignants seem to flame
In the sun's rays.

ASTLEY.

Such flames their blood may quench,
Or ours, ere long! The King?

OFFICER.

He heads the troops
Right gallantly; they meet their foes, my lord,
The ranks of Fairfax: high *his* standard floats,
I know it!

ASTLEY.

It shall trail in dust to-night.—

That we must linger here!——

OFFICER.

The Prince, my lord,
Already conquers. Ireton's line is broken—
His forces fly! And now the King too—honour,
All honour to King Charles!—Back Fairfax bends
His line.

MESSENGER [*hastily arriving*].

Ride onward, onward, gentlemen!
The King commands.—One charge on Fairfax'
square
With your brave aid may end the fray.

ASTLEY.

Thanks, Heaven!—
Thou know'st how busy we this day must be,
Good Lord! If we forget thee, do not thou
Forget our souls. Set onward boys!

Officers, Guards, &c.

King Charles
And England!

[*Astley and his followers depart. The Stage
remains awhile unoccupied. Battle cries
and trumpet blasts are heard from the*

*distance, blending in wild confusion.
Eventually they seem to approach.*

Enter SIR JOHN CANSFIELD, *fighting on foot with*
LIVESAY, *a gigantic Roundhead.*

LIVESAY.

Die, thou gray-headed traitor to thy God!

SIR JOHN.

My aged arm!—Cannot such cause renerve thee?
Old sword, dost fail me?

*[Sir John, sorely wounded, staggers, and all
but falls.]*

LIVESAY.

Perish in thy crimes!

Enter WALTER CANSFIELD, *hastily.*

WALTER.

Ha! wretch!

*[He rushes forward and confronts Livesay. Sir
John falls.]*

LIVESAY.

And who art thou, rash boy?

WALTER *[furiously]*.

The son

Of him thou murder'st!

LIVESAY.

Die then !

[They fight fiercely.]

SIR JOHN.

For her sake—

His mother's sake—O God !—

[Livesay has disarmed Walter and beaten him to his knees.]

LIVESAY.

Young spawn of hell,

I crush thee !

WALTER *[rising wildly and grappling with Livesay, whose sword he seeks to rend away].*

Not so soon !

SIR JOHN *[half rising].*

He's lost—lost—lost !

WALTER.

Victory—victory !—Thanks, Lord !

[With the might of frenzy he wrests Livesay's sword from his grasp, and smites him to earth with it. The Puritan dies. Walter kneels in praise.]

SIR JOHN.

My son—

WALTER [*rising and rushing to his side*].

Dear father——

SIR JOHN [*faintly*].

Thou art wounded.

WALTER.

Not on me

Think now !

SIR JOHN.

Oh, all is past for me, dear son !

Live yet to glad thy mother's eyes !—Live yet

To serve thy Monarch's cause !

WALTER.

Yes, yes, my father !—

Thy blood flows fast !

SIR JOHN.

Thou can'st not hem its course.

Life ebbs. How goes the day ?

WALTER.

Well—well !

SIR JOHN.

Thanks, Heaven !

So let thy servant part in peace !

[*He dies.*]

WALTER.

My father !

Look up, look up.—He's gone !—O blest in death
To think all well !—Alas, I fear.—I saw
Our left wing waver——and return I cannot.
I do believe I die too.—Dear, dear father !
At least, he thought not that !

COLONEL PAGE, *Officers, and Guards appear in the
background.*

PAGE [*to Officer*].

Ride, Wilton, ride !

Recall the Prince, for Heaven's sake ! or, I fear,
All's lost !—We'll wait thee here. [*Exit Officer.*

WALTER [*faintly*].

How fares the field ?

PAGE.

Young Walter Cansfield ?—And thy sire beside
thee.—

Ha ! dead !—thou dying too, as thy cheeks' paleness
And loss of blood——Assist him, friends.

WALTER.

Vain, vain !

I am sped.

PAGE.

Was yonder outstretched lofty form
Thy foe's ?

OFFICER.

The terrible rebel, as men call him—
Stern Livesay !

PAGE.

Ha ! thou fought'st him ?

WALTER.

With God's grace
I slew him. For my father's life I fought,
So wonder not—but speak ! The day ?

PAGE.

Goes ill.
Cromwell hath charged the King. He bade us
guard

This pass, and send some envoy to recall
Prince Rupert from pursuit !

*Soldiers and some few Officers of the Royal Army
appear flying hastily in the background.*

COLONEL PAGE [*loudly*].

Arrest the flyers !

What means this, friends ?

FLYING SOLDIER.

All's lost !

OFFICER.

Lord Carneworth turned
The monarch's steed. We could not stay our
soldiers.

PAGE.

Return ! return !

Enter LORD ASTLEY with Officers. Flyers have continued and continue from this time to throng the background passing onward to the left.

ASTLEY.

Shame on ye, soulless cowards !
Back to the field with me !

OFFICER.

The King hath fled !

ASTLEY [*striking him down*].

Foul liar ! 'Twas a false alarm ! My friends,
The King fights at our head ! Return, return !
If ye desert him, all is lost !

[*Many follow Astley to the Field.*]

COLONEL PAGE.

Back flyers!—

*We still must tarry here!—By Heaven! the King
Doth shame us all.*

[The Flyers continue constantly to increase.

Cries from the Background.

All's lost! all's lost!

*Enter from the right PRINCE RUPERT and his
Horsemen, with Officers, &c.*

PRINCE RUPERT.

For England!

For Charles! for Rupert!

*[He and his Horsemen, with loud shouts
charge through the flyers.*

WALTER CANSFIELD *[who has been supported and
tended by Page's followers, carried away by en-
thusiasm].*

Onward to the field,

Speed thou my' soul!—Burst, burst thy bonds
asunder!—

I die! Forgive my sins, just Heaven!

[He falls back and dies.

COLONEL PAGE.

Such death,
In honour's arms, be mine ! There fell the last
Of Cansfield's loyal race !

OFFICER.

All's vain—all's vain !
The flyers still increase. The King, the Prince
Are overborne—

MESSENGER [*from the right to PAGE*].

On, Colonel, to the field !
The King would hazard all for victory.
Never man shewed more calm resolv'd courage,
More royal zeal than he !

[*Page and his friends also hasten to the charge.*
Meanwhile, the Scene is thronged by confused hosts
of flying Royalists. The shouts and tumult of
the battle approach ever nearer, till at last the
Rebels, driving the Royalists before them, attain
this spot. The KING and PRINCE RUPERT, in
various parts of the field, are seen riding up and
down, and exhorting their disheartened men to
charge.

PURITANS [*triumphantly*].

Sword of the Lord
And Gideon !

OTHERS.

Cromwell !

PRINCE RUPERT [*from the distance*].

Stand, dogs, stand !

THE KING.

Charge, men

Of England !

COLONEL PAGE.

All is vain !

ROYALIST CRIES.

Retreat ! retreat !

PURITANS.

Smite, smite, and overthrow !

PRINCE RUPERT [*to the King*].

'Tis vain ! You must

Withdraw, Sire—

KING CHARLES.

God's high Will be done !

PURITAN CRIES.

For Cromwell.

The Lord of Hosts prevails.

[*Amidst tumultuous outcry, the King, Prince Rupert, and other Royalists, retire on the left, still fighting in retreat. The Puritans fill the Stage.*]

See ! Fairfax, Cromwell !

Hail, chiefs of Israel !

FAIRFAX and CROMWELL *enter from the background with Officers, &c.*

CROMWELL.

Haste ! pursue, pursue !

Smite ye the tyrants ! None be spared ! Complete

The work of heavenly vengeance !

Cries.

Follow Cromwell !

A Fairfax ! Cromwell ! Heaven and England triumph.

[*Tremendous tumult. The Puritans follow in pursuit. Scene changes.*]

SCENE V.

A Pass some little way from the field of Naseby.

LORD ASTLEY and OFFICERS &c. *guard it.*

FIRST OFFICER.

The Earl of Lichfield, too ?

ASTLEY.

Ha ! Lichfield dead ?

Most luckless day ! Was never braver gallant—
Beat never nobler heart. And lost—*all* lost !
And all so well nigh won ! Had not the Prince,
As ever, thought alone on his own glory,—
Had he but succour borne,—not followed madly
Their routed Left - - Well, well, what's done is done !
Were *I* the King though—Comes he, friends ?

SECOND OFFICER.

Even so.

ASTLEY.

I read it in your eyes.—When he has passed,
We follow.

*Enter KING CHARLES, followed by PAGE and
others.*

KING CHARLES.

Swiftly rode we. We have distanced
The Puritan pursuit. Where bides the Prince ?

PAGE.

He follows, Sire—is nigh !

KING CHARLES.

Ha ! Astley, here ?

ASTLEY.

We guard the pass, Sire, till your Majesty
Hath 'scaped all danger.

KING CHARLES.

Faithful, gallant Astley !
I am much loved, if hated much. This yields
Some joy in sorrow.

OFFICER.

Sire, the Prince !

KING CHARLES [*aside*].

We meet then.

Rupert, thy frenzy hath destroyed thy King
This day !

Enter the PRINCE with his followers.

PRINCE RUPERT.

The King ?

KING CHARLES.

Here, Rupert, safe ! We meet
Thus, Rupert !

THE PRINCE [*wildly*].

O my King ! You can but curse me—
I—I——

KING CHARLES.

Dear Nephew, you are now my all—
Forgive, my Astley !—Friends, the past be past !
Think not on blame ! All have done well, this day !
And now, one word. Henceforward little hope
Remains of conquest. I shall chide no man
Who, for his wife or children's sake, should leave
My hapless cause this hour ! To those thus
severed

By fortune from my side, I say, “ God bless ye—
Your King will love ye still, wheree'er ye bide !”
Now onward !

Loud Cries from the ROYALISTS.

Onward *all* ! The King for ever !

KING CHARLES.

Come, then ! Your King rejoices in your love.
God's with us still, while we ourselves desert not !

[*The Royalists set forward.*

The Curtain falls.

A C T V.

Jan. 7, 1649.

SCENE I.

*Cromwell's Audience-Chamber in Whitehall.*CROMWELL [*alone*].

THIS day a tyrant dies !—England, rejoice !
My zeal hath wrought thy safety.—Yet, even
yet,

Let me not triumph ere the hour. I fear
I scarce know what. Fairfax would gladly stay us ;
But *him* we can find means to check. The nation,
Ay, ay, the people—they themselves confess not
Their proper good. I verily believe
They would yet save this Stewart, had they power.
But he must die ! God's cause—the world's—re-
quires it.

For Freedom's, for the Gospel's sake, alike,

His life is due. He would tread down the Commons,

Would elevate these hell-sprung bishops still.

My duty then was clear ! Whoever blame me,

Whatever pangs I feel, I act not here

As Cromwell, but as England's minister,

Condemned to strike the blow. Enough : he dies !

His patience in these troubles, (obstinate

Perversion of the will, which I do curse !)

This hath wrought many weaker hearts to pity ;

To me it proved him trebly dangerous,

And so ensured his judgment. I will think

No more. To business !

[He rings a bell on his table.

Wait there none without ?

[To Attendant, who appears at the entrance.

ATTENDANT.

The Major-General Harrison——

CROMWELL *[interrupting him]*.

Admit him

Without delay !

ATTENDANT.

Four Peers, so please you, Sir,

Are also in attendance.

CROMWELL.

Peers? What mean'st thou?
I know no Peers in England!

ATTENDANT.

Pardon, Sir,
Those called by men, after such carnal wise;
As Richmond, Hertford, Lindsey, and Southamp-
ton.

CROMWELL [*aside*].

They come to plead for——[*aloud*] Let them
wait! Forthwith

Bid Harrison enter. [*Exit Attendant.*]

He hath power o'er Fairfax,
And must, whate'er is needful, work him to,
Despite his frenzied wife.

Enter HARRISON.

Well, Sir, what tidings
Of Fairfax?

HARRISON.

General, he is blindened still—
Grace not vouchsafed.

CROMWELL.

Go to him straight from me.
Hold him in check ;—he must not know this deed
Is wrought *to-day*, till it *be* wrought ! Acquaint
him,

That in my godly wrestlings yesternight
In prayer, I strove to raise one for this monarch ;
But my tongue clove unto the roof o' the mouth—
Heaven thus pronounced its will. For greater
surety,

Call on him, Harrison, beside thee now
To pray, for fuller light on this emergence,
If Charles's death be willed above or no.
Thou too wilt pray. Detain him in such worship
Until the hour be past !

HARRISON.

Since you command—

CROMWELL.

I pray thee, rather. Do this, Harrison,
And reap thy full reward in earth and heaven.
We cannot ever please ourselves in working
The will of Gracious God. It pains *me* sorely

That Heaven hath trusted me with this commission
To work a tyrant's death. But I obey,
Whatever be the consequence. So thou
Perform the Lord's command, and fear not. Eng-
land
Shall bless our names for ever for this service.
Farewell !

HARRISON.

I haste to work your will and Heaven's. [*Exit.*

CROMWELL.

And now then for the sought for audience
Of these malignant Peers. They come to me !
They find at last where true power lies. Ha ! ha !
—Beware ! Repulse these godless thoughts, O
Cromwell !

Subdue all carnal pride. [*After ringing his bell, to
the Attendant, who reappears*] The Lords
may enter.

*After a pause, the DUKE OF RICHMOND, the MAR-
QUIS OF HERTFORD, the EARLS OF LINDSEY,
and SOUTHAMPTON, are ushered into the Au-
dience Chamber. They remain alone with CROM-
WELL.*

CROMWELL.

What seek ye?

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Justice!

EARL OF HERTFORD.

Mercy!

CROMWELL.

For yourselves?

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

None dare accuse us.

CROMWELL.

Think ye?

EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

For the King,

Our King, your King, we speak.

CROMWELL.

I know him not.

I have no King. I know the man, Charles Stewart!

DUKE OF RICHMOND [*controlling himself*].

We will not brawl for titles, General.

Speak you of Charles, we of the King. But hear us,
For Heaven's sake, hear us! In this awful hour,

When you have reached the pinnacle of might
In all men's fancy, when you have to seal
Your endless shame or glory—now, now pause,
And prove to the admiring world that Cromwell
Nor fought, nor lived for self, but England only !
Yet have you power, even yet, to save the King—
To save his people from the direst crime
On record, hellish regicide !

CROMWELL [*sneeringly interrupting him*].

Your grace ?

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

None hear us, Cromwell, none. Thou may'st repent.

Restore thy noble King to power again,
And so secure thine own, as his state's pillar,
As his right hand of office. What we offer,
King Charles shall sanction. Yet bethink thee,
Cromwell !

All order, all degree, have reached their end
The hour thy Monarch dies. That hour the rabble
May push thee from thy seat of council ! Pause,
then,

Secure more certain good with honour, Cromwell,
Nor choose foul shame, perchance with earthly
ruin !

We wait thine answer.

CROMWELL.

Said you not, Lord Duke,
That none did hear us ? And you also urged me
To prove I lived for England—England only ?
I will prove that, my Lords. Now, to my sight,
All England is around me, even here,
And hears your every word and mine, and reads
My every thought. I have no secrets, Sirs,
From England. In her presence I reply :
The King must fall ! He is a godless tyrant,
And I am doomed his executioner,
By will, if not with actual arm. This, Sirs,
Is my commission. I for this have lived,
And will this task fulfil.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

BlaspHEME not, Cromwell,
For mercy's sake !—that mercy which one day
We at Heaven's bar may seek together ! Crom-
well,

I pray thee—I implore thee, spare thy King !
I am thy foe—yet on my knees would lie
Before thee, could I shield his sacred life !
Cromwell, show mercy !

CROMWELL.

When the Lord hath spoken,
Man has but to obey. Pardon, my lords,
But I must crave your absence. I have business
Of weighty import calls me.

EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

Shall we thus
Return ? O friends !

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

My King !—O agony !
Cromwell, behold !—kneel all ! See, England's
Peers
Are on their knees to thee. Recall this sentence,
Thou hast the power. Give the King life, but life !
We'll bless thy name ! All else may follow - - -
Cromwell !

[CROMWELL rings the bell hastily, on which two
Attendants enter.]

CROMWELL [*triumphantly*].

Ye kneel before the Majesty of England,
Set forth in me so humble ! I rejoice
To mark your patriot lowliness. But rise—
Subjection of your hearts will serve our purpose.
We look not for such outward symbols. [*To the*
Attendants] Show
These nobles to our gate !

[*The Peers have risen indignantly.*

And you, Sirs, seek
Charles Stewart, if ye will, and tell him, Cromwell
Will work the will of Heaven. My Lords, good
day.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Then rest accurs'd ! thou——

CROMWELL [*loudly*].

Ho, guards, without !

Guards enter.

Conduct these four men hence. Give them fair
escort

Unto Whitehall, should they demand it.

[*The Peers withdraw, guarded.*

[*Aside, in the foreground*] Now

To see, myself, if all things are prepared
For this great Judgment hour. My heart rejoices
In this subjection of the proud of spirit.
What now shall mar my joy? I do achieve
My life's great task, and vanquish—

ATTENDANT.

General,

Your son.

CROMWELL.

Ha! Richard?

Enter RICHARD CROMWELL.

RICHARD.

Yes, my father—I!

CROMWELL.

What seek you?

RICHARD.

Bid these men retire! I crave
Some speech with you.

CROMWELL.

I have no time for follies.

RICHARD.

You must—must hear me !

CROMWELL.

Must I ?—Duteous son !

Yet be it so ! Some moments then—Retire !

[To the Attendants. They obey.]

CROMWELL *and* RICHARD CROMWELL *remain*
alone together.

Now speak !

RICHARD.

O father, I have sought for days

A hearing—hoped too to the last !

CROMWELL.

Hoped what ?

RICHARD.

You would not slay your King !—not murder him

Anointed England's Ruler !

CROMWELL.

Dare you speak thus ?

RICHARD.

I dare. You know me weak. Well, I am weak,

But strong enough to speak for justice, father—

To cry aloud against this crime !

CROMWELL.

Poor boy,

Thou art bestraught !

RICHARD.

With horror for such deed !

It may be so. Yet hear me—hear me, father—

For Heaven's sake, hear ! You know the King
most true,

Most just, most good. He ne'er can use again
His power to harm you. If you work this murder,
There is no pardon—none—for you. All earth
And heaven will cry against you. I, your son,
Must hate, must curse ! And even those who
praise you

Will in their hearts abhor ! You are alone
Henceforth—alone on earth—in other worlds
To what communion doomed ! Relent, relent,
Or draw down God's eternal wrath upon you !
Your soul must feel these truths—it must, my
father !

Think me a fool, a babe, in earthly wisdom—
Out of the mouth of sucklings God may perfect—

CROMWELL.

No more. I'll hear no one word more ! Yet *thou*
List this reply ! Think'st thou my life's great pur-
pose

Should be abandoned in fulfilment's hour
For paltry fears and scruples ? Think'st thou,
Richard,

Thy trembling prayers could awe my soul ? No :
curse me,

Condemn me, if thou wilt ! My course is chosen,
And I retrace no step. Though all alone
On earth henceforth, as thou dost prophesy,
My spirit shall not quail. I will not flinch
From my appointed duties. For the rest—
Think what thou wilt, I have no time to answer
Thy silly scruples now. Withdraw !

RICHARD.

That tone !

That brow, inexorably stern ! My prayers
Are vain then—I might speak to rocks as well !—
Speed other aid then ! [*Going toward the door on*
the left] Enter !

The door is cast aside. The WIFE and DAUGHTERS of CROMWELL enter. They hasten to CROMWELL, and fall at his feet.

CROMWELL [*angrily*].

Vain intrusion !

HIS DAUGHTERS.

Father, O father !

HIS WIFE.

Cromwell ! Husband, hear us !

Reprieve the King !

ALL.

Mercy for him—for thee !

[*Richard kneels beside them.*]

CROMWELL [*commanding himself*].

Knew ye me e'er desert my firm fixed purpose ?—

I tell ye, in the Lord Jehovah's name,

I doom Charles Stewart to death !

RICHARD [*after a long pause*].

In all our names, then,

Thou hast no more our love !

CROMWELL.

I am prepared

To live without that love, if thus I lose it—
In working God's great vengeance. What I suffer
Perchance ye dream not, though ye add fresh tor-
tures

To my worst woe - - - Retire! if ye will leave me,
Thus desolate—if ye will join my foes
And heap your curses on a father's head—
Work ye your will! I mine!

WIFE [*deeply affected*].

O Cromwell!

RICHARD [*hastily*].

Hence!

Our prayers may yet take root. Leave we his
presence,
And pray we God may light his soul!

[*After a mute pause, the Family of Cromwell
retires on the left. CROMWELL remains
alone.*

CROMWELL.

The world
Shall praise me! Here within my home of homes,
In my own circle, meet I curses.—God!
Strike I for Justice' sake? Or for Ambition?

If so it should be, then—I am lost for ever,
In this world and the next! I yet might pause,
Might save! And yield to Satan's promptings?

Live

So long in vain? Abandon life's one purpose?
Charles, I do hate thee! And the Spirit tells me
I am more fit to rule than thou. This England
Shall in my rule be blest! It shall! The means
To gain this mighty goal, they are not sinless——
I'll think no more! 'Tis now too late to change.
Charles, I will seek thy presence—tell thee why
I slay thee—prove - - - I cannot meet him! Ha!
I fear? No, never! Cromwell, hold thine own!
This day thou seal'st thy glory, and for ever—
England is thine to sway! Complete thy work!

[Exit hastily. The Scene changes.]

SCENE II.

The Chamber appointed for the KING'S Confinement in Whitehall.

The KING in converse with his Children, the PRINCESS ELIZABETH, thirteen, and the DUKE of GLOUCESTER, seven years of age.

KING CHARLES [*to the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, who is seated on his knee*].

AND then they will cut off thy father's head.—

[*The Child looks very steadfastly on him, but gives no answer.*]

Mark, dear one, what I say : they will cut off
My head, and wish perhaps to make thee King.
But do not thou be King, my child, whilst Charles
And James, thy brothers, live. If they can catch
them,

They will cut off thy brothers' heads : thine, too,
At last ! I charge thee, do not aye consent
To be a King, through them !

THE DUKE.

I will be torn

In pieces first !

KING CHARLES [*with tears in his eyes*].

My dear, dear son ! And thou,
Elizabeth ?

THE PRINCESS [*falling on her knees beside him*].

O father !

KING CHARLES.

Thou can'st *speak* not,
Poor child ! Let not these things so harass thee,
Elizabeth ! Prove worthy of thy name—
One great in soul hath borne it. One more mission
Have I for thee, dear child. When thou shalt see
Thy mother, as thou must do,—tell her then,
That in the hour of death my heart was hers,
As it had been through life—that even in thought
I never failed tow'rds *her* ! These words remember.
Wilt thou, Elizabeth ?

THE PRINCESS [*her voice almost choked*].

If I should live
To see her. But I fear——

KING CHARLES.

Yield not thus wholly

To sorrow, dearest daughter ! Much thy mother
Will need thy love henceforth—this brother, too,
Our darling Gloucester. After all, sweet child,
Why need we weep ? You do not think me guilty ?

PRINCESS.

I ?

KING CHARLES.

Well, Elizabeth, I am most guiltless
Of hate to England—and I dare to say
I have aye loved my God, my heavenly Saviour.
Why weep then ? Go I not to joy ? I know
Still tears will fall—yet such despair——

PRINCESS.

O father,
When you are dead, what hope remains—for Eng-
land—
For my poor brothers—for us all ?

KING CHARLES.

Dear child !
God still will live above. I am not needed
To work his purpose.

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

Father, do you think

You will be ever near us? Some have told me
That spirits pray for men.

KING CHARLES.

I do believe

That I may pray for you, sweet child: yet this
Remember. Never let your love seduce you
To pray to me! Pray only to your God,
Your Saviour! Cling, my child, I do beseech you,
To that true Church in whose most blissful faith
I die this day! Let nought seduce thee ever
To quit its fold—this bind I on thy soul—
Geneva's license and Rome's tyranny
Flee both alike! At Heaven's own judgment-seat—
Thou know'st we all shall stand there one great
day—

I will demand of thee, if thou hast proved
Thy honour for my latest prayer!—Elizabeth,
I need not speak of this to thee. Already
Thy soul hath chosen “Mary's” part.—Remember,
Dear Gloucester, in all things on earth save this,
Work thou thy mother's will! and me in her
Thou aye obeyest. For thy brothers——

HERBERT *appears at the entrance, right.*

HERBERT.

Sire,

Four faithful servants of your Majesty
Implore a parting audience.

KING CHARLES.

Who are they?

But, whosoe'er, admit them!—For a while
Dear children!—I will call ye forth again,
Before I go - - - to pray! Dear Bishop Juxon
Is there within methinks. He will instruct you
How to bear earthly ills. Farewell, awhile—
No mournful partings now.

*[The Princess and her Brother retire through
the entrance in the background.]*

*Immediately after enter the DUKE OF RICHMOND,
the MARQUIS OF HERTFORD, and the EARLS OF
SOUTHAMPTON and LINDESEY, ushered in by
HERBERT, who forthwith withdraws.*

DUKE OF RICHMOND *[advancing]*.

Dear Sire!

*[They all kneel before the King, and kiss his
hand.]*

KING CHARLES.

My Lords!—

O faithful servants! Are you come then——Rich-
mond,

Dear Kinsman! Loyal Hertford! Good South-
ampton!

And Lindesey, too. Ah, say the world its worst,
There have been noble hearts in England's Council,
And these were mine, are mine!

MARQUIS OF HERTFORD.

My gracious Monarch!

KING CHARLES.

Weep not, dear Hertford! Though these tears
may shame not

Your reverend age, yet weep not! No, rejoice
With me, that all my ills find end this day.

I have borne much, dear friends.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Your own gray locks,
Gray long before their time, do prove it! O
That thousand lives like mine could give you back
To happiness!

KING CHARLES [*smiling*].

One death will do that office.

Yes, Richmond, I am happy on this day,
For Heaven vouchsafes me, in its grace and love,
An inward confidence, a strange assurance,
That all things will be well—that in due time
Both State and Church shall rear them ! And for
me—

I gain—I trust, dear friends, I dare to trust—
A Martyr's Crown this day ! For England's
Church

And England's State I die. Seems this fate mourn-
ful ?—

You do not think so ? No : but I *have* suffered—
I own it—not with hopeless grief, as you
Perchance might think,—for God has ever deigned
To comfort me. Still, my poor England's wrongs—
The dangers of my Charles—the severance
From my sweet Queen—all these have worked me
sorrow.

But now, all these are past ! One thought still
pains me—

That England should not think me true. But time

May do me justice.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Royal Sire, if this
Be all your fear, then in Heaven's sight I say,
Our people trust and love you. Yes, whate'er
These hypocrites decree—the Nation's voice
Could it gain utterance, with decisive cry
Would seal your innocence !

KING CHARLES.

You think so, Richmond !
That thought is sweet ! And yet, this passing pity
May spring but from my sorrows. And years
hence

The ancient calumnies may soar again,
And men may deem me false and foe to freedom—
And bards, too, bards, my Richmond, may pro-
claim me

A regal tyrant ! Well, the day will come
When all things shall be known. Till then my
spirit,

If it have cognizance of earthly deeds,
Must bear this penalty. And, after all,
Perchance this doom is just !

LORDS [*hastily*].

How? Just?

KING CHARLES [*smiling mournfully*].

I know

Ye scarcely would believe your King a tyrant,
Did he proclaim him thus. I have loved England,
Have ever acted for the best—I feel it.
But let me not forget how parliaments,
That crossed me, in my first rash years of sway,——

EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON.

Sire, they were traitors! *We* know, all men know,
By wild rebellious spirit moved, they dared
Deny your every prayer!

KING CHARLES.

That did they, friend.

Yet might I milder means have ta'en perchance
To move them. I conceal not from myself
That that same spirit now supreme, which hates
All dignities, possessed their leaders' souls.
So forced they me perchance to action! Still,
I made necessity my plea, good friends,
For *my* deeds then—and now this parliament,

Even on the selfsame plea, without the show
Of law or right condemns me. Gentle Richmond,
There is a poet we have read together,
And loved. What speaks he of the poisoned cha-
lice

Commended to our own sad lips? Ay, ay,
I am not faultless!

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

Sire, yourself deceive not!
You had no choice. Returned those times again
To-morrow, you could act no other part:
And rest at least assured! None, none, henceforth
Will aye be dull or mad enough to think
You tyrant! None! No bard!—If bard there be
Who speaks thus falsely, may eternal curses
Rest on his——

KING CHARLES.

Pause, dear Richmond. Do not think,
All men see with our eyes.

DUKE OF RICHMOND.

All men, Sire, now,
Abhor your foes. I heard but yesterday

From London's mob, the fiercest execrations
On those Scotch cravens who surrendered you.
Their treason, Sire, I fain must curse. Henceforth
Be Scotland and the Scotch the mark of shame
Perpetual! Never——

KING CHARLES.

O, no more, I pray thee!
For Scotland, as thou know'st, I loved it ever,
Still love. It is a noble land, dear Richmond.
And for its people—make we due allowance
For party hate and scorn: these, these do blind
 them!
But think what faithful friends hath Scotland fur-
 nished.
Montrose remember! Nay, our fiercest foes
Have much of noble too.

EARL OF LINDESEY.

You are too kind,
Dear Sire, to form such judgments.

KING CHARLES.

As you will.
Your love doth make you err. I scarce should
 chide.

And yet, one word. In after days, when Charles,
My Charles, is King again, as he *will* be,
Remind him, I have bound upon his soul
To take no vengeance for the past : to leave
All who condemn me, to their God. Of these,
Some are betrayed by misdirected zeal,
Erring in head, not heart : and those more guilty,
In this world and the next must meet their Judge,
And reap their meed appointed. Pray ye for them !
And now, dear friends, farewell. Let not our
parting

Be long or mournful ! I have little need
To bid ye in the after time prove loyal !
Your hearts shall teach you how to act. Once more,
Farewell ! Time presses, and each moment makes
This parting but more painful.

DUKE OF RICHMOND [*his voice almost choked*].

Dearest Sire,
Farewell ! We will not bid you die with glory,
With joy ! for oh, you soar—how far above us !
For us, we can but love and weep. Farewell !

THE OTHER NOBLES.

Farewell !

KING CHARLES.

Our blessing rest upon you ever !

[The four Peers again kiss their Sovereign's hand, and then withdraw in silent and reverential grief. A pause.]

KING CHARLES *[alone]*.

One meeting more, my children ! Then my last
Weak earthly commune with my God.

HERBERT *appears at the entrance.*

HERBERT.

O Sire,

A stranger with the seal of parliament
Claims entrance. He approaches.

KING CHARLES.

Who is this ?

CROMWELL *enters, his face and form enveloped and concealed. At a sign from him, Herbert withdraws. He advances towards the KING.*

CROMWELL.

I, Cromwell,—King Charles Stewart !

[He divests himself of his disguise.]

KING CHARLES.

Thou !

CROMWELL,

Even I.

KING CHARLES [*after a pause*].

Well, thou art welcome hither. Yet, be brief :
I have few moments left me, and my children—
My God, demand those moments.

CROMWELL.

King—

For King thou yet must be, until the axe
Descends—I see thou hast not misconceived me.
Thou dost not think I seek thee to reprieve
Thy life. Thy friends have knelt before me, King,
Richmond and Hertford, and the rest—imploring
My clemency ! In vain !

KING CHARLES.

The faithful servants !

And would not wound my spirit by confession - - -
But to the point ! What seek'st thou ?

CROMWELL.

I have come

To let thee know I seek but England's weal—
Own this great deed is just !

KING CHARLES.

Say on !

CROMWELL.

What need

For words, Charles Stewart ? Earthly honours
Are nought to thee and me this hour : confess
Thou would'st enslave thy country ! Thou re-
pentest
Thy many tyrant deeds ?

KING CHARLES.

I do repent

No deed save Strafford's death, and my consent
To the ejection of the Church's rulers
From the State's Council.

CROMWELL.

Hardened in thy pride !

So be it ! Die then hardened ! Know in me
A man who lived for England, England only,
And now for England dooms thee. Heaven hath
set

My task appointed. It hath called me forth
To be thy executioner. So dream not
That I do feel regret in this great hour !
My soul knows fullest triumph—it hath gained
Its goal—and I am happy !

KING CHARLES.

Rest so, Cromwell !

If conscience will allow : and when ambition
Hath gained thee for awhile, as it will gain,
The sovereign sway ; assert thy country's honour :
And—hear me, Cromwell ! on thy soul I bind
This charge : restrain the bloody zeal of frenzy !
Let not God's Church be persecuted, while
Thou bearest rule ! Let not those seats of learning,
Cambridge, and her twin sister, which in death
I bless, my golden city Oxford, let
Not these be crushed ! I have no more to say.
Thou call'st *me* tyrant ; I will think thee *true*.
May the great judgment-day prove thee in error,
And me not over-lenient ! Fare thee well !

CROMWELL [*after a long pause hesitatingly*].

Farewell ! - - Charles - - I - - - [*Collecting himself*]

Soul, arm thee ! Even now

Hell tempts thee only.—King ! despair and perish !

[*He rushes away wildly on the right.*

KING CHARLES.

Unhappy, self-deluded man ! Ambition
And frenzied bigotry contend within thee.
May Heaven forgive thy sins ! [*Going to the door
on the left*] Come forth, dear children !

*The PRINCESS ELIZABETH and the DUKE OF
GLOUCESTER issue forth, BISHOP JUXON be-
tween them.*

Ah, thou, dear bishop, too ? Have you in part
Soothed these beloved-ones' grief ?

BISHOP JUXON.

Prayer, gracious Sire,
Hath *somewhat* wrought, I trust. But time alone - -

KING CHARLES.

It must be so ! I see, Elizabeth,
Thou hast restrained thy tears to please me : thence
Dost almost faint. Nay, give thy grief full sway,
Or it will choke thee ! We must part, dear chil-
dren :

But not for ever! You have heard, my Gloucester,

Of Heaven, I know; and *pray* to Heaven for me :
I must go thither, through God's grace !

THE DUKE [*bursting into tears, and throwing his arms round his father, who raises and enfolds him*].

No—no—

No—father! Leave us not behind you, father !

PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

O could we die too !

KING CHARLES.

'Twas a selfish wish,
My own Elizabeth! Thy dearest mother
Would pine to death without you. But farewell !
Farewell on earth !

[*He embraces them both tenderly.*

Let all your lives, my children,
Show, by their purity and trust in Heaven,
That you did love your father!——Herbert !

HERBERT *appears at the entrance.*

Lead

The Princess and the Duke away, I pray.

Now, dear ones, you are children of a King :
You will not shame me, I am sure—will strive
To make me happy, as your lives alone
In happy virtue can do—Bless ye both !
Bear ye my latest blessing to your brothers—
Bid *them* too ne'er desert their Church ! Fare-
well ! - -

No groans—no cries. Remember, you are Stew-
arts !

There's my sweet children !—Dear Elizabeth,
Protect your brother, and for his sake keep
Your grief in bounds ! I die this day, to live
For ever, and in joy ! Farewell ! farewell !

[*The Princess and the Duke are led away by
Herbert.*]

Yes, I am happy. Heaven will shield them, Juxon,
Will guard them for its own ! An inward voice
Assures me. Let us hence to prayer !—One mes-
sage

I have for thee to Charles.

BISHOP JUXON.

My King, I wait you.

KING CHARLES.

Within.—I heard just now methought—(perchance

'Twas fancy)—sweetest music! strains of joy

To hail me! I do hope my griefs atone

The sins of yore—hallowed as *were* those griefs,

As *are they*, by my trust in earth's Redeemer.

Come, let us pray for England, for my wife,

My children, for myself in this great hour!

And then—though earth condemn me, Heaven
may bless.

The meek of heart are loved. I come, Lord,
quickly.

[*The King enters the Inner Chamber with
Bishop Juxon. After a long pause, the
Scene changes, and discloses*

SCENE III.

Open place before Whitehall.

The Scaffold is reared in the far background. The Square is thronged by crowds of attendant Spectators. Citizens, Cavaliers, Puritans, Soldiers, &c. &c. HYDE is amongst the throng.

FIRST CITIZEN.

COME they?

SECOND CITIZEN.

No, no—not yet!

PURITAN.

The hour of vengeance
Is nigh. Lift up your head, ye long oppressed!
Rejoice! Your tyrant perishes.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Cease, brawler!

OTHER CITIZENS.

Silence the Roundhead knave!

A CAVALIER.

Oh! wake ye then

To reason? By St. George, ye slept full long.
'Tis now too late, my masters!

HYDE.

True—too late!—

But think ye those who urged these horrors on
Alone to blame?—What then of those who loathed
them,
And might have stayed, yet did not!—

A WOMAN.

Poor, poor King!

YOUTH.

Well, I would die to save him!

SECOND YOUTH.

So would I,

Ten thousand deaths!

YOUNG PURITAN.

Ha! *one* is at thy service,
False heathen! Fly me not—

SECOND YOUTH.

I fly thee? Knave,
I'll brain thee. [*They grapple.*]

HYDE [*forcing himself between them*].

Cease, poor fools! Is this an hour

For strife? *You*, who rejoice in this great vengeance,

(As you do call it,) will it not suffice you?

Thirst you for baser blood? And you, poor dreamer,

Think you to honour such a King by strife,

Rude strife, even in the hour his royal soul

Flies heavenward?

WOMAN.

See, they come!

CRIES.

Mark the procession!

The Train pass through the background, approach and occupy the Scaffold. BISHOP JUXON is at the KING'S side. The Headsman walks before them.

PURITAN.

This is the hour of righteous vengeance. England
Secures her triumph now. From this day forth
No tyrant eye shall rule her!

FIRST CITIZEN.

Till to-morrow—

When Cromwell crowns him Lord of all.

SECOND CITIZEN.

Sirs, sirs,
Names may be changed and order be confounded ;
Yet great and small remain. Some head must sway
The body's members.

HYDE.

Cursed be foul Sedition,
Cursed pestilential malcontents that thrive
On lies ; yet cursed, with trebly deep damnation,
The brainless fools who might have hemmed the
 torrent,
Yet dully gaping eyed it rushing by !—

CAVALIERS.

Amen !

PEOPLE.

Amen !

CRIES.

Peace ! See !

PEOPLE, &c. [*confusedly*].

Doth the King speak ?
Who hears him ?—There was never King so royal,
So good !—We love him all !—A rescue—Mad-
 ness !

The soldiers three files deep surround the scaffold—
O Heaven receive him !

HYDE.

Earth shall bless !

CRIES.

Ah, see !

He kneels ! he kneels ! A sign !—the axe is raised !
Horror ! [*Long pause.*

HEADSMAN'S VOICE [*heard from the distance*].

Behold a traitor's head !

PEOPLE [*tumultuously*].

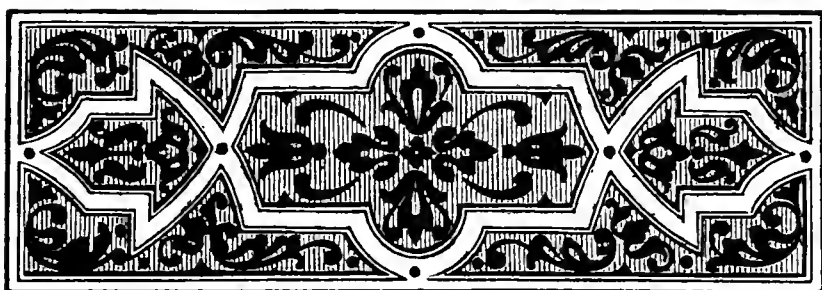
A Martyr's !

HYDE [*loudly*].

The voice of England be the voice of God !

Curtain falls.

THE END.



NOTES.

ACT I. SCENE I.

HAMPDEN. One of the most remarkable instances of a long political career of dissimulation, ever placed on record, is undoubtedly that of the notorious John Hampden. If historian ever lived anxious to do honour to the merits even of his foes, that historian was Clarendon. His language with regard to Pym, Fairfax, the Earl of Essex and many others, secures him at least the merit of a strict impartiality. The character he gives of Hampden may therefore assist us in arriving at something like a correct estimate of that worthy's true nature, inasmuch as the historian we rely on had opportunities during several years of closely watching the course of action of this notorious individual. Facts indeed prove more than any *foreign* estimate whatever, and to these we shall hereafter appeal. First, however, for Clarendon. He says (and if ever a finished delineation of a life of *honest* villany and *grave* deceit was given to the world,

it may surely be found here): “ Mr. Hampden was a man of much greater cunning (than Pym), and it may be, of the most discerning Spirit, and of the greatest Address and Insinuation to bring anything to pass which he desired, of any man of that time, and who laid the design deepest. He was a Gentleman of a good Extraction, and a fair Fortune, who, *from a life of great pleasure and license, had on a sudden retired to extraordinary sobriety and strictness*, and yet retained his usual cheerfulness and affability; which, together with the opinion of his wisdom and justice, and the courage he had showed in opposing the ship-money, raised his reputation to a very great height, not only in Buckinghamshire where he lived, but generally throughout the kingdom. He was not a man of many words, and rarely begun the discourse, or made the first entrance upon any business that was assumed; but a very weighty speaker, and after he had heard a full debate, and observed how the House was like to be inclined, took up the argument, and shortly, and clearly, and craftily, so stated it, that he commonly conducted it to the conclusion he desired; and if he found he could not do that, he was never without the dexterity to divert the debate to another time, and to prevent the determining any thing in the Negative, which might prove inconvenient in the future. *He made so great a show of Civility, and Modesty, and Humility, and always of mistrusting his Own judgment, and esteeming His with whom he conferred for the present, that he seemed to have no opinions or resolutions, but such as he contracted from the information and instruction he received upon the discourses of others, whom he had a wonderful Art of go-*

verning, and leading into His principles and inclinations, whilst they believed that he wholly depended upon their counsel and advice. No man had ever a greater power over himself, or was less the man that he seemed to be ; which shortly after appeared to every body, when he cared less to keep on the Mask.”—And now to come more immediately to facts, let us quote from the same authority a plain account of Mr. Hampden’s political career. “ For the first year of the Parliament, he seemed rather to moderate and soften the violent and distempered humours, than to inflame them. But wise and dispassionate men plainly discerned, that that moderation proceeded from prudence, and observation that the season was not ripe, rather than that he approved of the moderation, *and that he Begot many opinions and motives, the Education whereof he committed to other men ;* so far disguising his own designs, that he seemed seldom to wish more than was concluded ; *and in many gross conclusions, which would hereafter contribute to designs not yet set on foot, when he found them sufficiently backed by majority of voices, he would withdraw himself before the Question, that he might not seem to consent to so much visible unreasonableness ;* which produced as great a doubt in some, as it did approbation in others, of his Integrity. What combination soever had been originally with the Scots for the Invasion of England, and what further was entered into afterwards in favour of them, and to advance any alteration of the Government in Parliament, no man doubts was at least with the privity of this Gentleman.” Now here let us pause for a moment to consider what these counsels were, in all of which the single-

mindèd Hampden participated. Passing over the secret treasonous aid to a then half-foreign Nation, let us only fix our attention on the more directly iniquitous home-proceedings of this Parliament. These will indeed be treated of elsewhere; yet so much we may say here: more infamous, unconstitutional and tyrannical measures, were never adopted by any despot upon this earth of ours. Not only were attempts made to destroy the Church of the Realm, to place the whole power of the militia in a faction's hands, to seize all the private revenues of the crown, but crowds were also incited by these "honest" men to insult the King and Queen and all loyal members of either House; and all loyal petitioners throughout the realm in behalf of the Church and Crown were incarcerated with the most infamous severity, for their daring in upholding what they believed the cause of Freedom. It is difficult and impossible to speak of such proceedings with too absolute contempt and horror: but when we consider that the gentle, prudent, self-possessed Hampden was privy to and eventually foremost in promoting these iniquities, we should indeed attain the climax of wonder, were we not well assured of the crafty dissimulation and spirit of low and despicable guile which characterized that most unhappy man. He perished indeed in his guilt by a judgment of God's Providence, upon that very field where he first incited rebels to sedition, and that under the most remarkable circumstances, for which we refer our readers to history. Hampden, amongst all his confederates in rebellion, was the most inimical to God's Blessed Church within this realm, for which he expressed, however, as

we might have been naturally led to express, a very profound degree of esteem. When the Bill was introduced for taking away their votes from the Bishops, Falkland was induced to support it, on an express promise from Mr. Hampden, as he (Falkland) told Hyde, that if this were acceded to, no further proceeding against the Established Church should be entered upon by Hampden or any of his party. How far this promise was carried into effect, more especially by this glosing Puritan-Jesuit, we need not pause to explain. In fine, Hampden's political life was a career of profound fraud, ending in the most malignant and wicked violence. The one good action imagined to have been wrought by him, his opposition to the demand of ship-money, (a demand occasioned by the insolent and infamous refusal of the Parliament to grant funds for that war which had been commenced by their own express desire,) this most doubtful act of perverse disloyalty may be contrasted, by those who dote on disobedience, with a long career of guile and crime. To conclude, in the language first applied to Cinna, which Clarendon has also employed in the description of this bold, bad designing man. "He had a head to contrive, and a tongue to persuade, and a hand to execute, *any Mischief!*"

FALKLAND. I have not taken that favourable view of the character of this nobleman which most historians have concurred in adopting. Extreme moral weakness seems indeed to have been one of the characteristics of this well intentioned man. Though supported by the example and advice of his friend Hyde, he repeatedly swerved

from the cause of right, and consented to unjust and iniquitous measures on the ground of expediency and the necessity for concession. I should be sorry to find that a passage in my preface upon this subject were interpreted into an attribution of the same faults to the living Lord John Manners. The somewhat unjustifiable diffidence of this most promising nobleman alone exposes him to the possibility of such a comparison. Perhaps the recent manifesto of Lord Ashley, in the shape of an Address to his Constituents, is more characteristic of a weak and yielding character approximating to that of Falkland, who was preserved however by his strict integrity and highly honourable feelings from ever falling into the actual abyss of Treason. His despondency after the commencement of the war, exhibiting as it does his utter want of any real root in himself, and the absence of true moral resolution and manliness, is an extremely painful object of contemplation. Falkland contrasts indeed most favourably with the patriot Hampden, in as far as honesty and truthfulness are concerned; but his irresolution and moral timidity, his disposition to abandon his King's cause, or at least not to support it openly in Parliament, at a period when the proceedings of the incipient Rebels were most iniquitous, and the Crown was in the greatest danger, cannot fail to weaken our sympathies with this otherwise estimable character. In fine, in another age Lord Falkland might have perhaps commanded our admiration: in his own, he only excites our pity.

ACT I. SCENES II. and III.

THE KING AND STRAFFORD. All historians concur in asserting, and not even a Macaulay or a Carlyle can well venture to question the fact, that all the members of the King's Privy Council, and all the Ministers of the Crown, concurred in demanding the King's assent to Strafford's death, as the only means of preservation for the Commonwealth. It is also not disputed that the Queen, whom Charles loved more dearly than aught on earth, save his England and the Church, joined most urgently in this terrible request. Crowds surrounded the Palace and threatened to murder their Sovereign. All men anticipated a bloody revolution as the consequence of the King's refusal to abandon his servant. Strafford himself wrote a most touching letter to his Royal Master, entreating him to end these fearful dangers to the state by consigning him to a death of glory. Still the King remained resolute. (See Hume, Whitlocke, Clarendon, &c. &c.) What eventually moved him is not clearly known: certainly not personal fear, of which his basest enemy could never dare accuse King Charles.—This much is certain. A bill had been introduced into Parliament for the destruction of the English Church. This bill had been supported by Pym, and appeared all but certain to be carried. After the execution of Strafford, Pym seems however to have changed his design, and to have relaxed in some measure in his *active* hostility to the Church. The bill was withdrawn after a somewhat mock fight; (for *his* share in which Clarendon probably claims more merit than was due to him;) and strange to

say, it was never introduced again, till after the absolute commencement of the Civil War ! Some private understanding was therefore considered highly probable. Laud too, and his brother bishops, though retained in prison, were not further proceeded against, until all bonds of union betwixt the King and Parliament were rent in twain ; and this, despite the fierce malignity of the Puritanic faction, who, as Clarendon plainly declares, were only held in check by the authority and influence of Pym. The reader will consequently perceive that the solution of this historical question which I have here given is perfectly consistent with the facts of the case. Strafford's strange exclamation of surprise, when the first official tidings were communicated to him of the King's assent, can only be explained after that fashion which I have made it my business to illustrate, or otherwise ascribed to a degree of meanness utterly inconsistent with the general character of that high-minded man. In fine, it is the author's firm belief, that the strictest investigation into the events of this remarkable period, will tend to render only more probable, if not absolutely certain, the critical correctness of that clue which he has propounded to its historical difficulties : and he once more boldly defies the most malignant modern Roundhead to point to any absolute discrepancy betwixt the real facts known to the world, and the account which he has rendered of them. This note should perhaps be extended to a greater length ; but the author's own feelings impress him with the conviction that notes to a poem or drama should never assume either the form or nature of long continued and carefully written essays. When they do this, they

appear to erect themselves into the principal objects of the publication, and so defeat the main intention of the poet.

ACT II. SCENES I. II. and III.

THE ATTAINDER OF THE FIVE MEMBERS. When the infamous lengths to which these criminals had instigated the Parliament of their land are considered, and the moral pusillanimity of the Church and State party is reflected on, which rendered it utterly impossible for the King to hope for any successful opposition on their part to the most flagrant iniquities; we shall, if unprejudiced, not feel a moment's hesitation in applauding the noble moral courage and true wisdom displayed by the King, in his attempt to seize those most malignant traitors, and bring them before the High Courts of Judicature of his country; to take their trial for life and death. We may feel inclined to blame the Monarch for not at once adopting that extreme course, afterwards so happily carried into effect by a Cromwell. I mean, the immediate dissolution of a Parliament, which had proved itself, in part so rebellious, in part pusillanimous to a degree beneath contempt. But, under the circumstances, it is probable that such a course would have involved a bloody revolution; and the horror, with which the King shrunk from the effusion of blood of his misguided subjects, is acknowledged and admired by all impartial historians. That the five members were guilty of the most infamous and insolent treason, almost tantamount to rebellion, no reasonable man can entertain a doubt. They had expressed their sympathy with rebels, they had endeavoured to de-

stroy the most venerable Institutions of the country, they had set the King's authority at defiance, they had incited mobs to assault his royal person. If such acts do not amount to the very grossest treason, I know not what proceedings can possibly be stigmatised with that appellation. It is well known that *this* act (the Attainder,) whatever be its merits or demerits, belonged entirely to the King. He acted indeed with Lord Digby's concurrence ; but all the dangers involved in its execution were encountered by the King himself, and the deed was ever avowed by him, as one of which he was justly proud. The subsequent manliness and self possession of the Royal Martyr, in the publication of his answers to the seditious "Parliament," (if that inconsiderable and ever-infamous assembly can be honoured by so lofty a designation,) this moral courage, I say, exhibited by the King, when all those even, who thought him most grossly wronged and were ready to fight for him, *were yet afraid to put their hands to any paper on his behalf*: this proves clearly enough that the King required no prompting for the adoption of the most vigorous and courageous measures. The failure of his noble attempt to redeem the fortunes of the State, proceeding as it did from the despicable weakness and cowardice of all his supporters in either House of Parliament from whom he might have expected some little show of resolution when their King had set them so glorious an example,—this failure left matters indeed in an even worse condition than they had attained to, before the scheme was first resolved upon. And yet there can be no doubt that if the King had submitted with sluggard resignation to his

country's dishonour, the same results would have been eventually arrived at ; and our Royal Martyr would not then have secured the glory, which he now unquestionably possesses, of having at least essayed to stem the tide of rebellion and national infamy. King Charles saw that the only hope of salvation for State or Church lay in the possibility of waking the Loyalists in either House from their trance of moral cowardice. He was unable to light a spark in their degenerate and sluggish natures ; and thus his design was defeated. But justly should we have condemned him for weakness and irresolution if he had not at least attempted to save his country, and awake some feeling of indignant patriot-virtue. Let our present Church and State-supporters throughout the land beware lest posterity should pronounce a sentence of contemptuous execration upon their memories ! Let them awake from the slumber of despondency and inert moral cowardice : or *their* names will be also inscribed on the tablets of infamy, and the poet or historian of future ages will blush when he commemorates the shame of his degenerate countrymen.

ACT II. SCENES IV. and V.

It is almost needless to say that all the leading events in this Act are strictly founded on historical truth. The scene, here described as passing betwixt the King and the Citizens of London, was not enacted on the day of the former's visit to the House of Commons, but on the morrow after that occurrence. The King's address too to the Citizens (which, like his speech in the House, is almost literally rendered by me from the page of History,) was

spoken in Guildhall: but it *was* delivered to a tumultuous and semi-rebellious assembly, and had a marvellous effect upon them for the moment. The introduction of that truly noble Lord Mayor, whose praises are so loudly sung by Clarendon, and who was eventually punished by lifelong incarceration in the Tower for his straightforward and unflinching adherence to Loyalty, will appear the more natural in the work of one who claims to be a descendant from this morally great and good man. Sir Richard Gourney,* (who was lineally sprung from one of the proudest of Norman races that had its origin in and frequently intermarried with Royalty,) by the weight of his moral influence actually kept down and eventually silenced, for years, the majority of the City's Common Council, who were malignantly and rebelliously disposed. For a long time he preserved the spirit of Loyalty in the people of London; and when he expired after years of living martyrdom, he carried with him a reputation to the grave, in which I, his unworthy descendant, most truly glory at the present hour; a reputation which it is the height of my ambition in some degree at least to make my own. I need not add that the fearful popular disturbances illustrated in this Act are rather underdrawn than exaggerated. The eventual desertion of the King by all his nearest and dearest, delineated in the last scene of this Act, is corroborated by every historian who has at all treated on this subject.

* Some doubts have been urged as to the identification of this Worthy with the old De Gournay line. I heartily trust that these may prove unfounded.

ACT III. SCENES I. and II.

THE PARLIAMENT AND THE PEOPLE. Pym's insolent denunciation, at the bar of the House of Lords, of all those who did not share his opinion, as malignants, (reproduced by me almost in his own exact words;) the Duke of Richmond's attempt to arrest this torrent of sedition; *his* temporary expulsion from the House for letting fall the expression that an adjournment for six months might be feasible; the tumultuous appearance of many thousands from Hertfordshire and other counties, accompanied by the London mob, bearing treasonous so-called petitions, and singing scurrilous songs; the impeachment of Lord Digby as guilty of high treason for daring to appear at Kingston upon Thames in a coach with six horses; these are all *literal facts*, which I have but faintly reproduced. Many of the most execrable enormities of the Malignants of that day I have scarcely been able to allude to. Clarendon will be found to set them forth with a degree of calm impartiality almost miraculous in the eyewitness of such astounding iniquities. The incarceration of members of either House who presumed—too late! to question the assumed worthlessness of their Monarch; the insolent and unparalelled seizure of the Bishops of the realm for daring to protest against proceedings which involved the most imminent danger to their persons, and compelled them to abandon the right of defending their Mother-Church when most insolently and malignantly assailed; the levying of severe fines on, or bodily imprisonment of, tens of thousands of loyally disposed men, who endea-

voured to approach London with petitions for the preservation of Church and State;—these with many other similar acts of execrable and ever accursed despotism I have but faintly touched on in the course of this Dramatic Poem. Traitors and hypocritical scoundrels had been allowed to rule the roast so long, that at last their insolence assumed the form of all but absolute frenzy. That the dark and traitorous designs of the Regicide Cromwell are but faintly shadowed forth in my sketch of his character, I am ready to admit. I found myself unable to delineate with any thing approaching to correctness, the odious union of impious cant with abhorred malignity which the character of this “Protector” reveals to us. I have turned with loathing from the contemplation of such a nature, and have found it difficult even for a moment to force myself into a species of dramatic sympathy with one so utterly devoid of all the nobler instinct of humanity. Such language by no means expresses my depth of abhorrence for this moral monster, who under the plea of the most intense faith in Heaven perpetrated the worst of crimes for the most mean and selfish of purposes. Perhaps in the annals of hypocritical dissimulation it would be difficult to match the impious devices of Cromwell and Vane at the period when the “self-denying ordinance” was brought before the Rebel Houses. Is it possible that those men can have believed in the existence of a God, who dared impiously to counterfeit the descent of the Holy Spirit into men’s hearts, and instigated the preachers throughout London to use the same language at the same hour, in order to convey the impression of their being all miraculously inspired?

At all events, if the men who thus acted *did* believe, what can such a Faith have been? But I turn with disgust from this subject; from the contemplation of a degree of scoundrelly duplicity which none but a Hampden has perhaps ever emulated below. Unfortunately I shall be yet compelled to recur to this character, ere I bring these hasty notes to a close.

ACT III. SCENE III.

THE KING AND THE BISHOPS' BILL. The facts detailed in this scene are all more or less strictly historical. I need not dwell at any length upon the subject. It is undoubted that all the King's Ministers, that in fact every one of his adherents in and out of the Houses, treated this measure as absolutely necessary, though it is equally certain that that necessity found its origin solely in their own despicable neglect of their first duties. It is impossible to deny also that the Puritans, and more especially Hampden, ever foremost in any scheme of low malignant cunning, endeavoured to convince the King that his Consort's life would be endangered by his persistence in the refusal of their demands. One word may I say here on the character of the Queen. I have drawn her such as I believe her to have been, with much of the naturally noble in her disposition, but under the influence of her priests, and further, partly perhaps from nature and partly from a French education, inclined to the employment of artful and underhand means for the attainment of her ends. That she truly loved her consort and laboured to support his dignity, there cannot however be the slightest doubt. She left England most

unwillingly, owing in a great measure to her royal husband's loving fears. She returned when the war had broken out, with troops and arms, and evinced all the qualities characteristic of a faithful and loving wife. She deserved therefore the love of our blessed Martyr King.—We need not bring any evidences to show how deep and pure was his affection for the Church. His bitterest enemies condemn but dare not dispute this love. And yet we err. A Macaulay has even affected to cast some doubt upon this. We may well leave however such absurd and slanderous imputations to that silent contempt which is their proper heritage. The attempt to prove the fact of King Charles's love for the Church of England were tantamount to a vindication of the truth that the sun is in the habit of shining by day and not by night. Enough of such malignant folly, which fortunately ensures its own condemnation!

ACT IV. SCENES I. II. III. IV. and V.

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY. In this Act, undoubtedly the most deficient in true dramatic life of the five which compose this poem, I have endeavoured to contrast the disorganised dissoluteness of the Cavaliers towards the expiration of the Civil War with the sanctimonious fervour of their enemies. I have also painted Prince Rupert and some of the other commanders of the Royal forces, in what I believe to be at least accurate if not over-vigorous hues. Further, by way of making some amends to the supporters of the Royal cause, whom I had found so little occasion to eulogise, I have introduced one aged Cavalier with his son as representatives

of that loyal gentry, who alone displayed an unmoving and consistent affection to Church, State, and Crown. I have alluded, though only incidentally, to those famous Cornish worthies whose memory shall never pass away, and I have placed on record my abhorrence of those excesses of a Goring and others, which were mainly instrumental in the final loss of the Royal cause. My picture of the battle is, I believe, strictly accurate. I may name Hume, Whitlocke, and Rush as my chief authorities. Finally, I recommend this Act to the clemency of my readers, who will easily imagine that little or nothing truly dramatic could be found in the mere chances of a pitched battle, and yet perceive that it was impossible to pass over the Civil War without devoting one act at least in some measure to its delineation. Much do I regret that the limits of a Dramatic Work should not allow of my doing justice to the noble spirit evinced by the University of Oxford, and many other memorable deeds, which I would gladly have illustrated within these pages.

ACT V. SCENE I.

CROMWELL AND HIS FAMILY. For almost all the circumstances detailed in this Scene I have historical warrant. The device, concocted by Cromwell and Harrison for the deception and occupation of Fairfax through the medium of prayer, will be found recorded by all the best historians. Once more must I express my conviction that I have but imperfectly shadowed forth Cromwell's intense brutality of soul. I abhorred to dwell on this even in fancy, and have therefore somewhat idealized his

character, for which I here tender my apology to strict historical truth. I have not painted the monster who with a levity disgusting and unparalleled daubed the face of his brother regicide with ink (*in fun!*) when signing the death-warrant of his unfortunate Monarch. It is well known, and beyond indeed the possibility of question, that Cromwell's mean ambition and bloodthirstiness alone precipitated this national crime. It is also true that his own family on their knees besought him not to yield to his ungovernable and unhallowed desires. I repeat, I have taken, perhaps wrongly, the more ideal view of his character, for which I expect to be blamed by all true lovers of the Martyr Monarch. I can make no other excuse, than that I chose, not even dramatically, to picture to myself the depths of brutal wickedness of this selfish and malignant regicide.

ACT V. SCENE II.

THE MARTYR MONARCH. What more should I say of this terrible national iniquity, which we can only think on *now* as a nation with deep remorse and lowliness of spirit! I have reproduced as faithfully as I well could the parting words of the King to his beloved children. His sentiments of universal charity and forgiveness of his most deadly foes I have also striven to illustrate. In the scene betwixt the King and Cromwell, I again do far too much honour to Cromwell's memory. Of the deep religious fervour of the Martyr Monarch I have offered on the other hand but a very insufficient idea. Still, such as it is, with all its imperfections, this scene bears at least I trust the impress of some feeling, and may possi-

bly effect some good.—This too may I say here to those whose feelings may be wounded by my assaults upon “the gods of their idolatry.” If ever poet or historian had terrible provocation given him, arousing all the feelings of righteous and holy indignation, such provocation will be found in the history of this unhallowed rebellion, and the infamous and ever to be accursed murder of the noblest of England’s Monarchs. Let modern Roundheads place themselves for a moment in the position of those who love the Church and its Royal Martyr, and they will find no difficulty in comprehending the indignation which I have so loudly and so freely expressed. Possibly my sentiments of horror and contempt may have hurried me occasionally into epithets that pass the bounds of lawful indignation. Yet it is my unhesitating conviction, which I make no scruple here to repeat, that I have not sufficiently stigmatized as *hell-born* these fearful deeds and their wretched mortal workers. For the rest, I do not pretend to be infallible. Let others think, and then decide, for themselves! My convictions are at least sincere.

ACT V. SCENE III. and last.

THE EXECUTION. The introduction of Hyde in this Scene is not founded upon any actual record. I have expressed but faintly the almost unanimous feeling of horror at the deadly crime which their own actions had given rise to, which at that moment pervaded the hearts of the English people. The last words of Bishop Juxon and of Charles, previous to the completion of the fatal deed, I have considered too sacred to introduce. Finally, may I be permitted to assert in the words of the states-

man Clarendon, that this flagrant and atrocious deed was in sooth the most execrable murder ever committed, since that of Him, whom it may seem profanation almost to name in connection with any mortal sufferer, our most blessed Lord and Saviour!

Remarkable Citation from Clarendon. Vol. i. p. 653.

In illustration of Note on the Attainder of the Five Members.

“IN the mean time, for a ground of further proceeding upon occasion, the King desired the Peers in Council, to set down in writing the Affronts and Violence which had been offered to them at London, by which their Presence in the great Council of the Kingdom was rendered both unsafe and dishonourable; the which they more willingly condescended to,” (does this mean, *consented?*) “for that the London Pamphlets already aspersed them, as Deserters of the Parliament, and Betrayers of the Liberty of their Country. An Instrument being drawn up, and agreed upon between them, in which they set down ‘The Tumults, and the Violence offered to particular Persons in these Tumults; the Riots and Menaces of the Rabble, at the doors of the House, when they had a mind any exorbitant thing should pass; the Breach and Violation of the old Orders, and Rules of Parliament, whilst Matters were in Debate, and the resuming Matters again in a thin House; and reversing, waiving, or contradicting Resolutions made in a full House; and lastly, Mr. Hollis’s coming to the Bar, and demanding the Names

of those Lords who refused to consent to the Militia, when the multitude without menaced and threatened all those Dissenters:’ after which, they said, ‘They conceived, they could not be present there, with Honour, Freedom, or Safety ; and therefore forbore to be any more present ; and so all these Votes, Conclusions, and Declarations had passed, which had begot those destructions throughout the Kingdom.’ And this they delivered to the King, signed under their Hands. And yet, which is a sufficient instance” (ay, indeed !) “how unendued men were with that spirit and courage, which was requisite, the next day after the delivery many Lords came to his Majesty, and besought him, ‘That he would by no means publish that Paper, but keep it in his own hands ;’ some of them saying, ‘That, if it were published, they would disavow it:’ so that material and weighty evidence, which then might have been of sovereign use to the King, was rendered utterly ineffectual to his service ; his Majesty finding it necessary to engage his princely word to them, “Never to make it public without their consent ;” which he performed most punctually : and so, to this day, it was never divulged.”

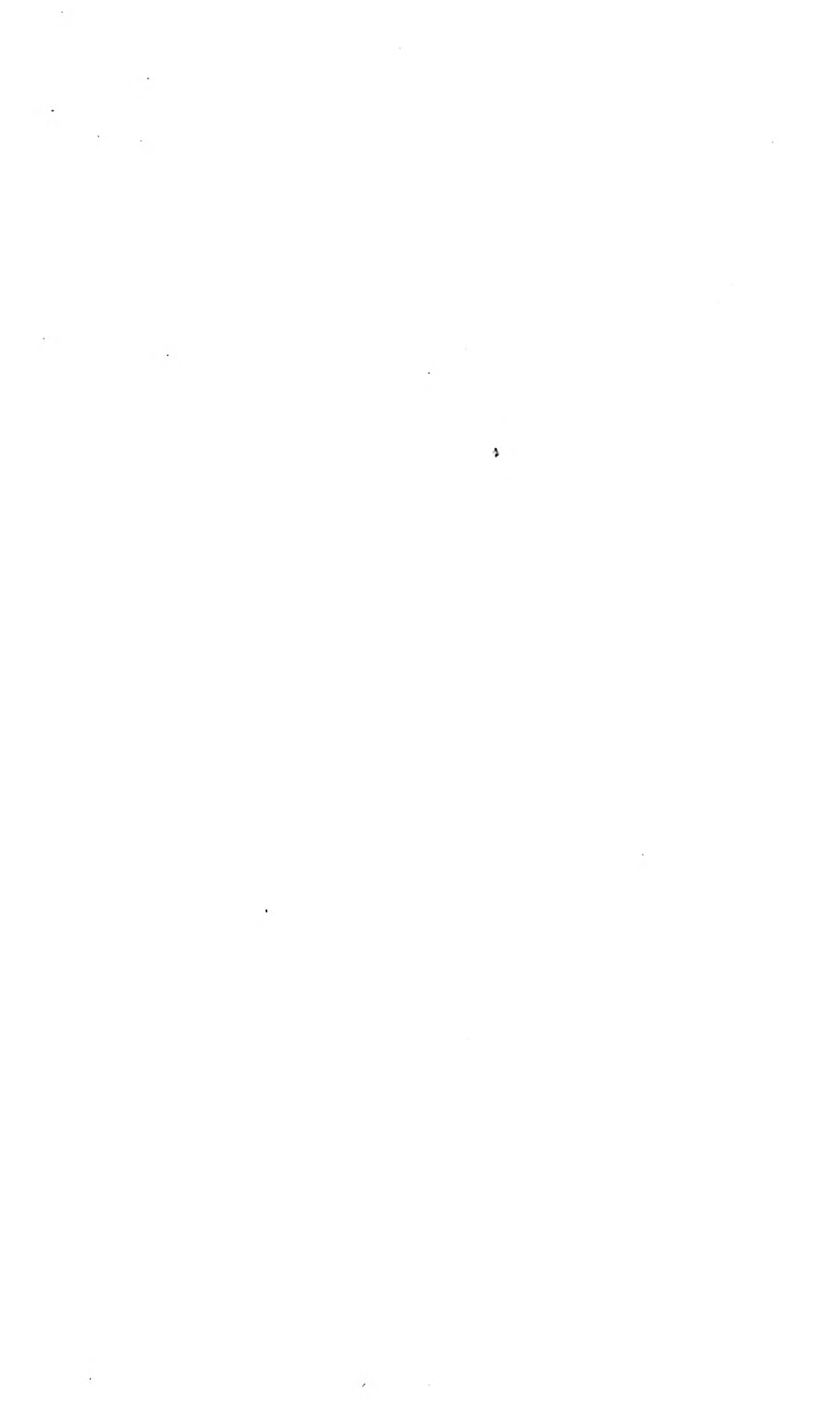
Is it needful to comment on such conduct? *And yet might not the same men, or party, pursue the same course to-morrow?*

Finally, let us learn, if we can, as Churchmen, a most solemn truth from the following fact ! We quote again from Clarendon. Let us learn, I say, not to exalt slight differences into mighty and all-important distinctions.

Let us learn never to despise the faith and loyalty of those who may be distinguished as the more Christian leaders of the so-called *Evangelical Party*.

“ And it was an observation of that time, that the Men of most licentious lives who appeared to be without any sense of Religion, or reverence to virtue, and the most unrestrained by any obligations of conscience, betook themselves to that Party (the Puritan Rebels) and pretended an impulse of Religion out of fear of Popery; *and on the other side, very many Persons of Quality, both of the Clergy and Laity, who had suffered under the imputation of Puritanism, and did very much dislike the proceedings of the Court, and opposed them upon all occasions, were yet so much scandalised at the very approaches to Rebellion, that they renounced all their old Friends, and applied themselves with great Resolution, Courage, and Constancy to the King's Service, and continued in it to the end, with all the disadvantages it was liable to.*”

FINIS.



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